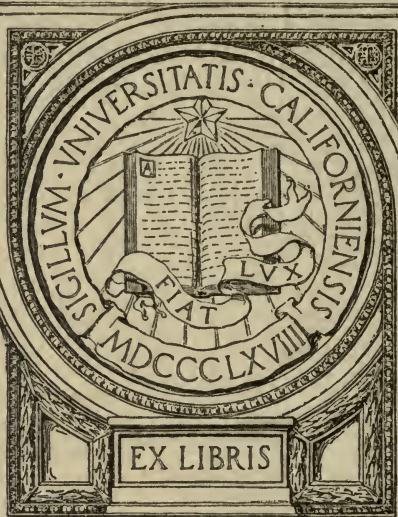


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THE FIRST NATIONAL CONGRESS OF MERCHANTS

ORGANIZED UNDER THE AUSPICES
OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE
OF THE
MEXICAN GOVERNMENT

Congreso nacional de comerciantes, 1st, Mexico, 1917



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CALIFORNIA

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THE FIRST
NATIONAL CONGRESS OF MERCHANTS

DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE
MEXICAN GOVERNMENT

dept of
agr & repts
industry & commerce



ESTADOS UNIDOS MEXICANOS

1914

THE FIRST
NATIONAL CONGRESS OF MERCHANTS



THE FIRST
NATIONAL CONGRESS OF MERCHANTS

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Summary of the Proceedings of the First National Congress of Merchants

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FIRST NATIONAL CONGRESS OF MERCHANTS



Mr. Venustiano Carranza, President of the Republic and
Honorary Chairman of the Congress.



HISTORICAL REVIEW.

INITIATION.

With the object of ministering to pressing wants, and of averting certain calamities, such as the shortage of food-stuffs, and an immoderate rise in the price thereof, and likewise of fixing certain procedure to facilitate in future the joint intervention of the authorities and of the merchants with a view to forestalling and remedying public uneasiness, without detriment to private interests, the State Department of Industry and Commerce, tendered an invitation to the National Chamber of Commerce requesting their cooperation in the celebration of a Congress of Merchants to discuss and solve the following questions:

- I.—The Moralization of the Merchants.
- II.—The joint organization of the Chambers of Commerce of the Republic, for the purpose of mutually imparting aid to one another, of public utility, and of representation before the Federal Government.
- III.—Means to be put in practice to develop both home and foreign trade.
- IV.—Measures that should be taken to counteract a possible rise in the price of articles of prime necessity.

PRELIMINARY WORK.

The National Chamber of Commerce of the City of Mexico enthusiastically accepted the idea and earnestly set to work at once starting by telegraphing invitations to all the different Chambers of Commerce in the country, and where such institutions did not exist, addressing the municipal authorities, to the end that the merchants of each locality should assemble together and appoint their respective representatives to the Congress.

INSTITUTIONS REPRESENTED.

In this way it was rendered possible that 130 Delegates should attend the Congress, representing:

- 30 Chambers of Commerce
- 40 Commercial centres not organized as Chambers
- 12 Municipal Councils
- 3 Agricultural Chambers
- 5 Corporations or mixed Chambers (industrial, agricultural and commercial)
- 2 Societies formed for the purpose of aiding Merchants
- 5 Foreign Chambers of Commerce
- 1 Commercial School
- 1 Association of Chartered Accountants
- 1 College of Brokers
- 1 Mexican Popular University, and,
- 1 Mutual Aid Society.

GENERAL RULES AND REGULATIONS.

The Rules and Regulations, comprising 14 articles brief and concise, provided for the organization of the Congress, the questions to be therein discussed, the personnel of the Executive Board, order and duration of the sessions, the balancing of the votes prescribing that the institutions repre-

sented should have only one vote each even if the number of their representatives were greater; the appointment and attributions of the Permanent Committee and the rules for regulating the work of the Secretary. Subsequently, two articles were added establishing the «quorum» required for the validity of the sessions and authorizing the Executive Board to appoint Reporting Committees when they should deem it advisable.

GENERAL PROGRAMME.

It provided for a preliminary session at which to elect the Executive Board, and another for the latter to appoint a Chairman; two solemn sessions (the opening and the closing session); fourteen ordinary sessions and one to approve the «Votes» and to elect the Permanent Committee; two official visits (to the Secretary of Industry and Commerce and to the President of the Republic); two banquets; three lectures offered by the Mexican Popular University; a visit to the High School of Commerce and Administration; another to the Technological Museum and a third to the Young Men's Christian Association.

Subsequently, invitations were received for other ceremonies organized in honour of the Delegates by the Mexican Geographical and Statistical Society and by the National University, the relative additions having accordingly been made to the original programme.

Lastly, four sessions in addition to the ones already provided for, were held and a banquet was given organized by the Delegates in honour of certain public functionaries and of the National Chamber of Commerce of the City of Mexico.

PREPARATORY SESSIONS.

At the first of these sessions, held on the 11th. of July 1917, Mr. Carlos Arellano, Chairman of the above mentioned Chamber and of the Organizing Committee, welcomed the re-

representatives of the National Commercial Community, and forthwith followed the election of the Executive Board in order that the latter might at once enter upon their duties; the following gentlemen having been honoured with the respective offices:

Chairman: Francisco M. Gonzalez; First Vice-Chairman, Carlos Arellano; Second Vice-Chairman, Adolfo G. Silva; General Secretary, Eng. Vicente G. de Quevedo; First Secretary of the Records, Pedro V. Rincón; Second Secretary of the Records, Lic. Eduardo Mestre; Treasurer, Melchor Ayala.

In order not to dwell any further upon the composition of the Executive Board, we shall anticipate events mentioning that it having been found necessary to reinforce the staff of the Secretary, two Vicesecretaries were appointed, they being Messrs. Arturo E. Padilla and Federico Compeán.

At the second preparatory session Mr. Venustiano Carranza, President of the Republic, Eng. Alberto J. Pani, Secretary of Industry and Commerce, and Eng. León Salinas, Assistant Subsecretary of the said Department, were respectively named in the order mentioned, Honorary Chairman and First and Second Vice-Chairmen of the Congress.

The Executive Board, by virtue of the powers wherewith they are vested, appointed the following gentlemen, Chairmen of the sessions: Mr. Francisco Alvarez, of Merida; Arnulfo Peralta, of Guaymas; Gregorio Cortina Basadre, of Tampico; Guillermo Wholer, of Mazatlán; Diego Santa Cruz, of Veracruz; Lic. Eduardo Mestre Ghigliazza, of Puebla; Cástulo R. Chavez, of Chihuahua; Eng. Bruno Newman, of Aguascalientes; Juan Lafarga Aragón, of San Luis Potosí; Juan B. Sahagún, of Torreón; Roberto Garza Cabello, of Saltillo; Manuel Ibargüengoitia, of Zacatecas; Arturo E. Padilla, of Monterrey; Pedro V. Rincón, of Guadalajara.

At this same session account was given of a courteous telegram from the Chamber of Commerce [of the City of El Paso, Texas, U. S. A., congratulating the Congress upon the

initiation of their work and wishing them the most fruitful results.

Mr. Federico Gagna, Chairman and representative of the Italian Chamber of Commerce and Labour, delivered an eloquent address couched in the most laudatory terms for the Congress, for whom he augured a complete success, which would redound to the good of the country.

SOLEMN OPENING SESSION.

This memorable act took place on the night of the 12th. of July with the attendance of the President of the Republic, and the Secretaries and Under-Secretaries of State, Representatives from the Chambers of Deputies and of the Senate, of the Municipal Council, of the Foreign Chambers of Commerce resident in Mexico, the First National Congress of Merchants, and a numerous assemblage.

On seats specially appointed for the purpose, were the Hon. Members of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps, previously invited to the ceremony.

The musical programme, short and well selected, comprising five numbers, was entrusted to the National Symphonic Orchestra, conducted by Professors Manuel M. Ponce and Marcos Rocha, the pieces having all been performed eliciting the loudest applause.

Mr. Carlos Arellano, in his capacity as Chairman of the National Chamber of Commerce of the City of Mexico, and in consequence also of the Organizing Committee of the Congress, gave a brief summary of the history of the work carried out by the former.

The Secretary of Industry and Commerce welcomed the Delegates in very kind and courteous terms, to which the Chairman of the Congress made most appropriate reply. Both speeches may be found in the second part of these "Records."

ORDINARY SESSIONS.

With all due regularity between the 13th. of July and the 4th. of August, nineteen sessions were held, in the course of which the different papers submitted were discussed and passed upon, the enthusiasm of the Delegates in no way diminishing nor the intelligence and the amicable fellow feeling which bound them together from the beginning having been in the least impaired.

In the course of the sessions six papers were presented on the «Moralization of Merchants,» seven on the «Joint organization of the Chambers of Commerce of the Republic, for the purpose of imparting mutual aid to one another, of public utility, and of representation before the Federal Government;» fifty three on «Means to be put in practice to develop both home and foreign trade» and twenty-nine on «Measures that should be taken to counteract a possible rise in the price of articles of prime necessity.»

In order to report on the papers submitted eight committees were appointed, having duly discharged their commission, and when about to bring the work of the Congress to a close, four other committees were designated and continue in their functions: the committee in charge of remedying the shortage of articles of prime necessity; that of organizing the Commercial Bank; that which shall submit to the second Congress the practical means of moralizing commerce, and, the Permanent Committee.

CLOSING SESSION.

This session was held on the 4th. of August at 8 p. m., Eng. Alberto J. Pani, Secretary of Industry and Commerce, in the Chair, and comprised a short musical programme entrusted to thirty five Professors from the National Symphonic Orchestra, the pieces being conducted alternately by Professors Manuel M. Ponce and Marcos Rocha.

Eng. Vicente G. de Quevedo, General Secretary of the Congress, reported on the work done by the Congress and Eng. Leon Salinas, Assistant Subsecretary of Industry and Commerce, delivered an address which, together with Mr. Quevedo's report, will be found in the second part of this volume.

LECTURES ORGANIZED IN HONOUR OF THE CONGRESS

The Mexican Popular University, which was founded on the 24th. of October 1912, organized three lectures in honour of the Delegates to the Congress; the first was delivered by the Rector of the University, Dr. Alfonso Pruneda, who dwelt upon the «Hygiene of the Merchant;» the second, which was illustrated with a great number of lantern slides, and the subject of which was «A projet tending to improve internal economic conditions,» was given by Mr. Manuel Cuesta Gallardo; and the third by Professor Alberto M. Carreño, of the Popular University, who spoke on «The War and Economical Interests.»

The Mexican Geographical and Statistical Society, which is the oldest scientific society in the Mexican Republic, in turn organized an entertainment during the course of which Eng. Jesús Galindo y Villa spoke on «Geography and Commerce,» and Lic. Ramón Mena on «Commerce amongst the Ancient Mexicans.»

Finally, the National University entrusted Lic. Daniel Quiroz, Professor of Mercantile Law of the Faculty of Jurisprudence, with the exposition of two interesting subjects directly relating to commerce, viz:

- 1) General bases for the amendment of the Commercial Code.

- 2) Bases for the regulation of the establishment of joint stock companies.

VISITS PAID BY THE MEMBERS OF THE CONGRESS
TO VARIOUS INSTITUTIONS.

To the High School of Commerce and Administration:

The visitors were most courteously received by the Director and several of the Professors of the Establishment, and conducted to the Academy Hall, where alternately with well chosen musical selections executed by pupils of the School, Profesor Rafael Sierra delivered an address welcoming the Members of the Congress, the Director, Professor Juan Leon, explained the proposed amendments of the plan of studies, and several of the pupils successfully went through exercises in mercantile arithmetic, financial calculations, and bank accounting.

To the Y. M. C. A. building:

Dr. Andres Osuna, a member of the Executive Board of the Association, on behalf of the latter welcomed the visitors and made a brief summary of the intellectual, physical and moral advantages derived by the members from this beneficent institution; the several departments of the Institution were visited and the several groups of merchants, young men, and leaders of the Gymnasium class, performed various exercises therein displaying great ability.

To the Commercial Museum of Mexico:

At this Institution, which now depends on the Department of Industry and Commerce, the Delegates were received by Mr. Santa-Ana, Almada jr., the Head of the Section of Commerce of the said Department, who spoke on the mission of training and of making propaganda performed by the Museum, the intentions which the Department has of giving the Museum greater amplitude and, the advisability that each and every one of the merchants should lend it their support, by sending samples to be brought before public notice, not only in this country, but also abroad.

VARIOUS SOLEMNITIES.

Visits paid by the Delegates to the President of the Republic and to the Secretary of Industry and Commerce:

On the 13 th. of July, at 4 o'clock in the afternoon, Eng. Alberto J. Pani received the Delegates in the Department building.

The ceremony took place in the Reception Hall, being very brief and limited to the individual introduction by Mr. Francisco M. Gonzalez of all of the Delegates.

Mr. Pani addressed the Delegates in courteous and encouraging terms, and forthwith all present betook themselves to Chapultepec, where they were being expected by the President of the Republic, Mr. Venustiano Carranza.

The Delegates were officially introduced by Mr. Pani himself, who in a brief discourse dwelt upon the unprecedented importance of the act which was taking place and expounded upon the great, patriotic, and administrative work carried out by Mr. Carranza ever since the time of the revolution.

After which, the President of the Congress, Mr. Francisco M. González, invested Mr. Carranza with the badge of the Corporation, explaining its object.

The reply of the President of the Republic was most patriotic, revealing his desires to better the condition of the people.

Following the official act a champagne-lunch was served in the corridors of the historical castle, and enthusiastic toasts full of faith in the future of the Republic were drunk, thus ending a day full of most pleasant recollections.

A Concert in the Amphitheater of the National Preparatory School:

The Department of Industry and Commerce, with the cooperation of the General Direction of Fine Arts, organized

this festivity in honour of the Members of the Congress and their families.

The select assemblage which filled the Amphitheater listened with great delectation to the exquisite music of such masters as Massenet, Bizet and Saint-Saens which was very talentedly performed by the National Symphonic Orchestra, artenately conducted by Professors Manuel M. Ponce and Marcos Rocha.

The well-known violinist Mr. Jose Rocabruna, accompanied by the orchestra, played on the violin the «Ballad» and the «Polonnaise» of Vieuxtemps, and the young singers Daniel Ramirez Aguilar and Luis Zamudio sang the duett from the «Pearl Fishers» for baritone and tenor.

Banquets:

To close this review there remains but to mention the banquets respectively offered by the Secretary of Industry and Commerce, the National Chamber of Commerce of the City of Mexico, and the Members of the Congress.

The first two having been decided upon beforehand, were announced in the relative programme, as courtesies offered by the State Secretary and by the Chamber of Commerce to guests who had journeyed from all parts of the country for the purpose of carrying out a transcendental work of union and concord, principally conducive to the welfare of the proletariat. The third banquet was organized afterwards by the Congressmen themselves, to correspond to the courtesies bestowed upon them.

On all of these occasions it was remarkable to witness the cordiality with which the delegates mingled together from the very first, the enthusiasm they put into their work, the good faith with which the most difficult problems were laid down, and the confidence by which they were actuated in the final results of the Congress and in a near future of prosperity for the country. So much so, that if in the course of the sessions of the Congress they all united as one man to study present difficulties and to forestall possible future ones, du-

ring the social gatherings bonds of friendship were made closer, and individuals who before the convening of the Congress had not even met each other, became now bound by ties of like aspirations and interests, all of which will result to a very great degree influential in the improvement of prevailing conditions.

FIRST NATIONAL CONGRESS OF MERCHANTS



Eng. Alberto J. Pani, Secretary of Industry and Commerce and
First Honorary Vice-chairman of the Congress.

A Communication addressed by the Department of Industry and Commerce to the National Chamber of Commerce of the City of Mexico, relative to the preliminary arrangements for the meeting of the said Congress.

Department of Industry and Commerce of the United Mexican States.—Section of Commerce.

The establishment of an efficient national organization of Commerce tending to open up markets in the interior of the Republic and to start and facilitate the traffic of merchandise within and beyond its territorial boundaries, has been a matter of never failing concern to our successive Governments. The Colonial Government too, notwithstanding the restrictions laid by the Metropolis upon the Colonies beyond the seas, took the care to organize Commerce by means of a corporation named «The Consulate», and in this way succeeded, in keeping the merchants in contact with the Government, with a view to furthering, to the mutual benefit of both the commercial activities of the country.

In latter days, unhappily, the lack of cooperation of the merchants among themselves in the different sections of the country, and their isolation from the General Government, have rendered very difficult, not to say impossible, the carrying out of any profitable collective measures. This undoubtedly is one of the reasons for the repressive, and sometimes violent, measures, that the Revolutionary authorities

throughout the whole country had to exercise upon the commercial community, during the past crisis in commodities, all the inhabitants of the Republic, but principally the poorer classes, suffering the disastrous effects of such intervention. At present, on the other hand, the increasing rise in the price of commodities, caused by the European war, which threatens to implicate the whole of the civilized world, and the poor crops in grain-producing countries, render necessary to nationally organize the commercial community in such a way as to enable it to efficaciously cooperate with the Government in studying and resolving the complicated and interesting problems which the said rise in prices will originate.

In view of which, the President of the Republic regards as a pressing public necessity that the commercial community organize themselves efficiently, establishing adequate organs in relation one with the other, through which with facility to communicate and cooperate with the General Government. Thus then, the Department of Industry and Commerce with these ends in view, begs leave to invite each and all the Chambers of Commerce in the country, to send a delegate to the FIRST NATIONAL CONGRESS OF MERCHANTS that, under the auspices of the said Department of State, is to be held during the coming month of July in the city of Mexico, devoting itself preferently to the study of the following subjects:

- I.—The Moralization of the Merchant.
- II.—Joint Organization of the Chambers of Commerce of the Republic, tending to mutual aid among themselves, public utility, and representation before the Federal Government.
- III.—Means to be put in practice to develop commerce both at home and abroad.
- IV.—Measures that should be taken to counteract a possible rise in the prices of articles of prime necessity.

The Department of Industry and Commerce commissions the National Chamber of Commerce in the City of Mexico to fix the date of inauguration, bearing in mind the greater or less facilities of communication and the grouping together of merchants from such States as do not count upon corporations to represent them; likewise to draft the program to which the work of the Congress shall be submitted.

I take pleasure in communicating to you the foregoing in reply to your esteemed communication of the fourth instant.

Mexico, May the 11th. 1917.

The Secretary of Industry and Commerce.

A. J. PANI.

To the President of the National Chamber of Commerce
of the City of Mexico.

City.

A communication from the National Chamber of Commerce of the City of Mexico to the Secretary of Industry and Commerce, accepting the commission with which the former was entrusted for the purpose of organizing the Congress of Merchants.

National Chamber of Commerce of the City of Mexico.

The Board of Directors of this Chamber of Commerce has carefully noted the contents of your esteemed communication dated the 11th. inst., wherein you express the desire that we fix the date for the inauguration of the Congress of Merchants and draft the programme to which the work of the said Congress shall be submitted.

The Board of Directors, in response, resolved to express to you their deep appreciation of the participation which the Supreme Government of the Republic thus grants to the National Chamber of Commerce, in the work which the Department under your worthy charge has under consideration; that the Chamber of Commerce takes the greatest pleasure in accepting the invitation and will cooperate to the full extent of its power towards attaining the object in view. We finally request that you be pleased to grant the Board an audience, naming the day and hour therefor, with the purpose of presenting to you the draft of programme requested and of having an opportunity of discussing the same.

I avail myself of the occasion to express to you the assurances of my most distinguished consideration and regard.

Mexico, May the 16th. 1917.

CARLOS ARELLANO,
President.

MANUEL COVARRUBIAS,
Secretary.

Report read by Mr. Carlos Arellano, Chairman of the Organizing Committee, on the occasion of the solemn opening of the Congress.

Mr. President,

Gentlemen:

As Chairman of the Organizing Committee of the First National Congress of Merchants, I have the honour of hereby presenting to you a report on the preliminary work undertaken in the discharge of the commission entrusted to us.

The Board of Directors of the National Chamber of Commerce in this city, very justly alarmed at the shortage and abnormally advanced prices of articles of prime necessity, resolved to send a petition to the Secretary of Industry and Commerce, earnestly requesting that he initiate the embargo on exportation of the above mentioned articles.

The Secretary, taking into consideration the importance of the petition, was pleased to support it before the President of the Republic, who most readily accepted the initiative, at the same time suggesting to the Secretary the advisability of convening a Congress of Merchants from all parts of the Republic, to study the measures that should be adopted to counteract the rise in prices of articles of primary necessity. The Secretary of Industry and Commerce not only enthusiastically seconded the idea, but resolved to give it a greater scope; and agreeably with the President, took advantage of the

opportunity to have this Congress discuss other important matters of very great moral, economical and commercial consequence to the Republic; at the same time entrusting the National Chamber of Commerce with the organization of the Congress.

The Notice of Meeting to this First National Congress of Merchants was issued on the 11th. of May.

The programme, as drafted by the State Secretary, comprises the following subjects:

- I.—The Moralization of the Merchant.
- II.—Measures that should be taken to counteract a possible rise in the prices of articles of prime necessity.
- III.—The joint organization of the Chambers of Commerce of the Republic, for the purpose of mutually imparting aid to one another, of public utility, and of representation before the Federal Government.
- IV.—Means to be put in practice to develop commerce both at home and abroad.

It is evident that these four points comprise both everything needed for the prosperity of Commerce, and what social requirements may demand at the hour of a crisis; the Board of Directors of the Chamber of Commerce, however, under date of the 16th. of May suggested to the State Secretary an addition to the programme, laying stress upon certain points which in their judgment might be discussed by the Congress, to wit:

- 1st.—Ways of communication, railroads, navigation, postal, telegraph and telephone services, tariffs in general, rolling stock, and facilities in transportation.
- 2nd.—The revision of the Customs House Tariff.
- 3rd.—The revision of the Commercial Code.
- 4th.—The modification of imposts and taxes in the Federal District and in the States.

5th.—The establishment of Mercantile Schools throughout the Republic.

6th.—The establishment of a Mexican Commercial Bank.

The foregoing subjects were regarded as comprised in the «Notice of Meeting» as issued by the Department of Industry and Commerce.

On the approval of the programme, the Organizing Committee solicited and obtained the privilege of the free use of the telegraph lines to transmit the necessary invitations, and on the 4th. of June one hundred and seven telegrams were sent to the various Chambers of Commerce established throughout the Republic, and in such places as none existed, the invitation was addressed to the Mayor of the town, requesting him bring together a group of merchants in the locality, for them to elect a delegate from among themselves, to represent them at the Congress.

On the 5th. of June the wired invitations were confirmed by post.

The invitation was enthusiastically accepted, and the Chambers of Commerce and the groups of Merchants appointed their respective delegates, the Mayors of the different localities deserving much praise for the zeal and promptitude with which they patriotically responded to our call.

On the 9th. of June last, the Organizing Committee appointed various committees to present studies on certain subjects susceptible of immediate discussion by the Congress.

These committees were represented by the following persons: Messrs. Luis Ludert y Rul, José Arce, Melchor Ayala, Juan P. Robertson, Manuel Bravo, Juan de Mata Contreras, Manuel Covarrubias Acevedo, Francisco M. González, Agustín Legorreta, Lic. Carlos F. Uribe, Vicente Quevedo, Lic. Antonio Ramos Pedrueza, Carlos B. Zetina, Luis Barroso Arias, Sealtiel L. Alatrisme and Manuel H. San Juan.

All of these gentlemen, notwithstanding their manifold

occupations, had the courtesy to accept the commission entrusted to them, and are already working on their respective subjects; the result will in due course be presented to your enlightened consideration.

The Organizing Committee also resolved to invite the Chambers of Commerce established in this City, and the Mercantile, Agricultural and Banking Centres, tendering invitations at the time to the French, Italian, Spanish, German and Austro-Hungarian Chambers of Commerce; to the Commercial Center, the National Mercantile Alliance, the Mexican Mercantile and Industrial Union, the Mexican Agricultural Society, the High Commercial School, the College of Brokers, Young Men's Christian Association, Mutual Society of Commercial Travellers, the Mexican Popular University, the Chartered Accountants and Bankers. All without exception replied appointing their respective delegates.

On the 23rd. of June Doctor Alfonso Pruneda was appointed Commissioner on behalf of the Department of Industry and Commerce to represent the Department in the administrative work of the Congress; very fit and valuable indeed is this acquisition, through the knowledge, experience and accomplishments for which Doctor Pruneda is so distinguished.

On the 26th. of the same month the Organizing Committee received the project for the Rules and Regulations of the Congress drafted by the Department of Industry and Commerce, which after some slight amendments was approved.

The Board of Directors of the Chamber of Commerce resolved to call its members to an extraordinary meeting which was held on the 4th. of this month, whereat they were informed of the work undertaken with regard to organizing the First Congress of Merchants. At this same meeting the members were invited not only to attend the sessions of the Congress, but also to lend their valuable assistance towards the accomplishment of the ends that are being pursued. They very readily accepted the invitation tendered and undoubtedly

many timely suggestions will be made for your enlightened consideration.

The Organizing Committee has held frequent extraordinary sessions thereat discussing with great pains all the questions related to the Congress. Many letters and telegrams have been exchanged referent to the organization.

Mr. President,

Delegates:

As you see by the brief report which I have had the honour to present, the work of the Committee has been but small; yet the ideals that we intend to realize are very great. The immediate results cannot be more satisfactory: here we see gathered together, for the first time in the annals of the Mexican Nation, prominent men of the Constitutional Government and representatives from the whole of Commercial Community throughout the Republic, all bent on one purpose: the reconstruction and the aggrandizement of our Country.

CARLOS ARELLANO.

Address delivered by Eng. Alberto J. Pani, Secretary of Industry and Commerce, welcoming the Members of the Congress.

Mr. President,

Delegates to this Congress:

Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is my first and foremost duty on the occasion of this meeting to express my deep appreciation to both the national and the foreign Chambers of Commerce, of the benevolence with which they have accepted the idea of convening this First National Congress of Merchants. My gratitude, indeed profound, is proportionate to the satisfaction which a true revolutionary feels when considering the significance of this Congress, which means that the COMMERCIAL COMMUNITY THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE COUNTRY HAVE JOINED THE REVOLUTION.

THE ARMED STRUGGLE HAVING ALMOST COME TO AN END and constitutional order—interrupted by the execrable military uprising of «La Ciudadela»—having been reestablished, the present Government can be nothing but the Revolution itself, politically instituted to give tangible and real form to its noble ideals of regenerating a people who during the lapse of almost four hundred years, has not been permitted to lead but an abominable, crouching, life full of misery and want. If the Government then is the genuine political incarnation

of the Revolution, the National Commercial Community diligently hearkening to the invitation tendered by the former, adheres to its lofty purposes of popular regeneration and openly declares itself for the Revolution.

If, on the other hand, the Commercial Community succeed in shaping their future conduct to this profession of faith—as it is to be hoped—they will deserve well of their country. And it cannot be otherwise: after the present inaugural session, which—as I have just pointed out—is above everything else, the SOLEMN PROMISE UNDER THE LAW made by the Commercial Community before the President of the Republic and in the presence of the Honourable Diplomatic and Consular Corps, in order that the resonance of this act be carried in all its loftiness beyond our boundaries and spread over the whole of the civilized world; once this formal and solemn promise of cooperation with the Government in its arduous task of renovation has been made; after so clamorous a manifestation of patriotism from a whole community—the one perhaps possessing the greatest moral influence of all—no one, absolutely no one, will dare to break the word now pledged.

Where then, in brief, lies the path on which the Commercial Community must tread if they are to live up to the covenant they have made with the Government? They will have but to follow that which the public weal should indicate.

It is a well known fact that our social community is economically constituted—through causes that date back to the Conquest and whose influence is felt even in our own days—by two sole groups, the WEALTHY and the POOR; that those in EXALTED POSITIONS, the strong, although constituting an insignificant minority, have exerted a decisive influence on the administration for the purpose of placing at the disposal of their personal interests not only the superiority of wealth, but also political power; the sovereignty of the State, administrative force; that those in HUMBLE LIFE, the weak, although

in an overwhelming majority, have been the ones despoiled, the starved, the ignorant, passive members of the political life, similar to slaves, to serfs; and as a necessary consequence of a co-existing, invincible, antagonism between the two groups, the atmosphere has reeked with hatred, rancour and mistrust. Under social conditions, fraught with such defects, it is easy to comprehend that our sickly national organism should almost exclusively and only too frequently have been shaken by bloody STRUGGLES OF CLASSES, hindering its progress of evolution, ruthlessly condemning it to be swinging backward and forward—as if governed by the synchronic movement of a fatal pendulum—between the bane of a dictatorship, and, a thousand times worse, that of anarchy.

The Porfirian dictatorship, was the longest of all, and too, was that which most deepened the abyss separating the two groups already mentioned, both through the effects produced by the economic progress attained, and the scandalous degree of corruption into which the higher classes had fallen. Hence it comes that the successive swinging of the pendulum of our misfortunes in the opposite direction, should necessarily have had to mark the most relentless and bloody intestine war recorded in Mexican history.

When the vindictive movement of 1910 was initiated, after a very brief struggle and yielding principally to the enormous weight of public opinion, the dictatorship consented to compromise in a minimum degree with popular demands—alone considering those of a purely political nature—and to place the Revolution on the road to constitutionalism, merging it so to speak into the dictatorial government, or rather the latter absorbing the former. This agreement magnanimously accepted by the revolutionary Leader, with the manifest purpose of averting a calamitous war,—in the light of the horrifying events that followed—now bears the aspect of a trap skilfully laid by the dictatorship. In truth, after a brief interregnum of relative and but apparent tranquillity—in reality of cryptic activities and disloyalty, of intrigue and

plotting—the monied and clerical reaction incarnated in a loathsome lombrosian specimen, again usurped power and rewarded the nameless crimes of its hero, grotesquely attempting to invest him—by the very proceedings of which it availed itself to check, almost in its birth, the vindictive conflagration—with the elevated office of constitutional president.

Fortunately, however, the bloody triumphs of usurping violence—which lacks the guarantee to last which justice and right alone impart—have ever been of short duration. Although the reaction found support in the army and in the Powers of the Federation, and in those of almost all the States—an unquestionable proof of the corrupting influence of the dictatorship gone by—the people once again took up arms in defense of their insulted rights: the Plan of Guadalupe which—with an audacity bordering on heroism and trusting solely to the excellence of the principles whence it originated and to the object it pursued, without falsehoods, nor chimerical promises of any kind, nor any of that bombastic and empty literature contained in the hundreds of «revolutionary proclamations» recorded in our history,—proclaiming in the most simple manner the resolution to disown the legality of the usurping regime and to use violence to destroy it, and entrusting the supreme command to a functionary popularly elected—the then Constitutional Governor of Coahuila—condensed with admirable sincerity and precision the most imperative needs of the country at that solemn and historical moment and succeeded in unifying the liberating movement; and the Revolution—having learnt a lesson from very harsh and very recent experience—with an irresistible and sweeping onrush spread from victory to victory, over whole Republic annihilated the Federal Army and obstreperously overthrew the Government of the usurper.

The struggle did not end here. In a community like ours so imperfectly constituted, antagonism between classes—accentuated by economical progress—as happened particularly during the latter part of the Porfirian dictatorship—

always brings about a greater mental inequality and a general lowering of the moral standard: what the upper classes gain in intelligence, in technical and economical capacities, they lose in political and social virtues; whilst the lower classes besides remaining at a much lower level as regards intellectual culture and technical and economical capacities, at the same time partially lose their former virtues of discipline, frugality, &c., without the loss being immediately compensated by the acquisition of other qualities of the same or of more elevated character. Thus then the unconsciousness or lack of morality, or both, of a good many in the revolutionary ranks—important factors in anarchy—presented the Reaction a propitious field wherein to display its marvellous skill for corrupting, and the division in the Vindicative Army was brought about, through the infidelity of the Northern Division, at the very moment when the people celebrated the total disappearance of the Federal Army.

This phase of the struggle—which begins towards the end of 1914 with the chaos brought about by the dismemberment of the revolutionary organism and which might be called despite that original chaotic condition, one of POLITICAL PURIFICATION AND STRENGTHENING of the said organism, since the MORAL PURIFICATION was hardly initiated by the former—is characterized by the efficient work of administrative and political reorganization of the Preconstitutional Government, in harmony with the general outlines for the country, sketched in the memorable decree of the 12th. of December 1914, and by a brilliant campaign carried on against treason and which was much more bloody and destructive than all the preceding ones, since in civil war fury is ever proportionate to the degree of affinity between the contending parties.

The faithless once annihilated and the revolutionary organism once politically purified and strengthened, it became possible to reestablish constitutional order in the country, not however by means of proceedings vainly masked with

a false appearance of legality, such as the Reaction used in its attempt to annoint their «Hero» with a dignity criminally usurped, but through the unavoidable mandate of the sovereign will of the people. The people therefore, when ratifying the confidence they had placed in the Chief of the Revolution, by conferring upon him the high office of Constitutional President of the United Mexican States, has wished to signify beyond any doubt, that the present Government of the Republic could not and should not be—as I said before—anything less than the Revolution itself, politically instituted to carry into effect the principles of popular regeneration, which it has proclaimed and that have cost so much blood and so many tears.

From the proceeding brief summary must be deduced with all the force of invincible logic, that if the Revolution has brought or is about to bring to an end the military campaign against the enemies of order and progress, it should most diligently follow up—in order that the blood and tears that have been shed may cristalize in positive benefit to the country—that other not now military but peaceful campaign of reconstruction of the nation upon bases that through their stability and resistance shall insure or at least make possible the unlimited development and evolution of the Mexican people. This work of reconstruction—very much more difficult and slower than the destructive work of arms—consists then of two parts:—the recovery of the aggregate amount of material and moral welfare lost—because war always involves a retrogression to a lower level of civilization—and the cure, so to speak, of the serious disease of economic constitution under which our community labours.

In the same way, as the ex-Constitutional Governor of Coahuila and Chief of the Revolution appealed to the patriotism of the citizens to adhere to the popular cause and take up arms, and organized armies and carried on a military

campaign—this being what the salvation of the country imperatively demanded—this same Chief of the Revolution—a title which the Mexican people have substituted for that of Constitutional President of the United Mexican States—now also appeals to the patriotism of the citizens to adhere to the popular cause and cooperate with him and organize the PACIFIC ARMIES to start the campaign of reconstruction which, consolidating the military triumphs, is now to save the country. This is why (the reason why)—and in accord with the fatal deduction to be inferred both from the study of our dissensions and of all STRUGGLES BETWEEN CLASSES in every country of the world, viz. that democracies have never been able to consolidate their military triumphs, in peace, by merely setting against the defeated class their hatred and ineptitude—that is why, I say, the Government commences by the celebration of the present Congress, a salutary work of cooperation with the people, in order to satisfactorily resolve the momentous problems relative to the different forms of activities of the life of the nation.

In this respect, the cooperation of the Commercial Community with the Government of the Republic does not only signify a harmonious collaboration, a convergence of efforts towards one point—the moralization, the intensification and development of the commercial activities of the country—interchange of information, &c., but it also signifies ADVICE, whereby the people may the better profit by the especialistic competition of their experts. I said the same thing on another occasion and I repeat it now:—«Our susceptibility as public functionaries cannot be hurt if we agree—nor may we do otherwise—that our political and administrative organization yet in swaddling clothes, must necessarily go through a period of INFANCY during which the blunders will be the general rule and the contrary the exception. In order to succeed, with the aid of a mature experience, in reversing the order of these terms, we must trample under foot all

in the betterment of the moral and material condi-

selfishness and not allow bastard passions to introduce discord among us, and we must consolidate our debilities by ever more and more strengthening that only bond of union that brings true citizens together: the love of country.»

«And the least that patriotism may demand of us now, in our capacity as public functionaries, is humility, wherewith to accept advice; serenity of judgment to prudently select it; and persevering and unflinching honesty to put into practice.»

But if active and mutual cooperation, unswervingly patriotic and unselfish on the part both of the Commercial Community and of the Government, is necessary to recover what has been lost through war in material welfare and in morals—in so far as regards the commercial activities of the country—it is even more necessary if the exhausted organism of the nation is to be restored to health and enabled to live a healthy normal life. A community which is principally composed of a few privileged ones and of a great mass of proletarians, wherein the former are able to rapidly accumulate fabulous wealth with immense facility regardless of personal savings or work, and regardless too of the personal savings or work of their forefathers, and the latter find themselves in the material impossibility of rising to the category of capitalists, is destined to be transformed into a vastness exclusive of all else but parasites and beggars, disappearing in the end after a more or less protracted yet most violent and painful agony.

This is, then, a serious pathological condition, revealed by the almost uninterrupted brutal STRUGGLES between CLASSES, a condition to which it is imperative to find remedy. Wherefore extraordinary joint efforts must be made tending to the intellectual, moral and economic regeneration of the proletarian, and to the formation and encouragement of an autonomous MIDDLE CLASS.

«Everybody is interested—says the Belgian Deputy Cooreman—in the betterment of the moral and material condi-

«tion of the working classes and they are right.... But the
 «preservation, the prosperity of the middle class is no less
 «just, and public interests demand that its existence be not
 «jeopardized. It is important to social equilibrium that the
 «differences between the wealthy and the working classes be
 «harmonized by the middle class, characterized by the union,
 «in the same hands, of capital and labour. If harmony is to
 «reign in society it is indispensable that there be in the social
 «ladder, between the top and the bottom rungs, a series of
 «other intermediate ones uniting the two extremes by gra-
 «dations more numerous rather than more distant apart.»

THE REVOLUTIONARY TENDENCY IS NOT DIRECTED TO-
 WARDS A UTOPIC SOCIALISTIC LEVELLING: ITS SOCIAL IDEAL IS
 TO PERMIT EVERY MAN TO OBTAIN FROM THE AGGREGATE
 SUM OF WELLBEING ACQUIRED BY THE WHOLE COMMUNITY,
 A PART PROPORTIONATE TO HIS PERSONAL CONTRIBUTION OF
 LABOUR, INTELLIGENCE AND ECONOMY.

Do you be pleased, Gentlemen, Delegates to this Congress,
 to contribute with all the might and strength whereof you
 may be capable, to the realization of so lofty an ideal of justice
 and.... BE YE WELCOME.

México, D. F., July the 12th. 1917.

A. J. PANI.

**Reply by Mr. Francisco M. González, Chairman of the Congress,
to the address delivered by the Secretary of Industry and
Commerce.**

Gentlemen:

You have listened to the brilliant and intelligent discourse of the Secretary of Industry and Commerce. It is true, the dictatorial period, as protracted as it was baneful, was the origin of the social conditions which it has been necessary to destroy in order to build upon a solid foundation of equality and equilibrium a new organization that may respond to the needs of the Mexican people. The absolute want of liberty, the denial of justice, the denial of all right, which were the fundamental principles of the dictatorship, were the cause of the Revolution, and it is for this reason that the Revolution spread to the people and came out victorious, shattering the old system of monopolies and privileges to make life more bearable to the destitute classes.

The Revolution which could not be carried out slowly and pacifically owing to the tenacious and intense resistance presented by the privileged classes, has had to be conducted by means of war, that is by means of conflagration, destruction and death, wherefore the Revolution has not been able to respect property, destroying everything it met in its course. But this destruction is justified if the causes for the armed movement, and the state of misery and abjectness in

which the people were, be taken into consideration; this justification becomes more patent when we recall the numberless humiliations and outrages committed by the governments supported by the aristocracy and the clergy. Fortunately for us, the Constitutionalist Revolution found and entrusted its direction to a man in every sense worthy of the respect of the nation and this man, whose austere life is a model of virtue and strength, of unselfishness and patriotism, with all valour and wisdom led the people to the land of promise whereat we have arrived. Let us start to work to recover the strength lost and build our national prosperity upon solid foundations. On the initiation of the constitutional period, when the Revolution became a Government, the people could not but invest the erstwhile First Chief with the high office of President of the Republic, because most rightly it expects, that in that lofty national position he will care for the people, will lay the foundations for credit, and will bring prestige to the Mexican Republic.

In the wake of every revolution there always follows a social betterment more or less intense, but ever favourable to progress, that casts aside the old methods after shattering them down. It is thus that the Constitutionalist Revolution, evolutive as all revolutions are, will produce the betterment of the country, a betterment which it undertakes to-day in the reconstruction of the nation, calling to its ranks not only those who shed their blood in the fields of battle, or those again who have been in a greater or lesser degree instrumental in its triumph, but all men of good will, all who are ready to do something for the good of their country, all who feel that the soul of the nation still quickens the lifeblood in their veins.

In every social organism the Commercial Community has been a necessary and important factor, being the link between supply and demand. It is therefore the body through which all the abundance of human wealth flows, thereby placing it in a position of regulating, sustaining and

improving the social organism. The National Commercial Community, of whose importance all are well aware, undoubtedly is the social body that has most suffered by the consequences of the armed movement: prices rising and falling, shortages on every side, difficulties of transportation, difficulties with exchange, robbery, looting, &c., &c. But it to-day acknowledges that the Revolution has been justified, and hopes that it will enter into an era of positive improvement, wherefore it now sincerely offers its collaboration and places its whole force and strength on the side of the Government, in order thus to contribute with all energy and patriotism to establish that economical equilibrium so necessary to the betterment of the destitute classes, with the deliberate purpose of averting fresh revolutions and of being the means that national aggrandizement become every day more efficacious.

The Secretary of Industry and Commerce has modestly told us that he does not believe himself infallible, a virtue inherent in men of character, in great revolutionaries, in those called to turn countries of pariahs, into nations of patriots, and that he desires the Commercial Community's collaboration rather in the sense as counsel. The Community has already said so, and I now repeat it in the name of my associates, it shall collaborate with all its might and strength, notwithstanding its firm conviction that with men like the President and the Secretary of Industry and Commerce at the helm, the future of the nation is wholly insured.

México, D. F., July 12th. 1917.

FRANCISCO M. GONZÁLEZ.

FIRST NATIONAL CONGRESS OF MERCHANTS



Eng. León Salinas, Assistant Sub-secretary of Industry and Commerce,
and Second Honorary Vice-chairman of the Congress.

Report of Eng. Vicente G. de Quevedo, General Secretary of the Congress, on the occasion of the solemn closing of the Congress.

In my capacity as General Secretary of the First National Congress of Merchants, I have the honour to inform you, with all possible brevity, on all of the work accomplished by this Congress from its preliminary meeting held on the 12th. of last month, to the last one which took place this morning. The Records of the Congress are to be published in a very near future, containing in detail all the work done.

The number of Delegates registered to the Congress was 130.

The Institutions represented were as follows:

- 30 Chambers of Commerce.
- 40 Commercial centres not organized as Chambers.
- 12 Municipal Councils.
- 3 Agricultural Chambers.
- 5 Corporations or mixed Chambers (industrial, agricultural and commercial.)
- 2 Societies formed for the purpose of aiding Merchants.
- 5 Foreign Chambers of Commerce.
- 1 Commercial School.
- 1 Association of Chartered Accountants.
- 1 College of Brokers.
- 1 Mexican Popular University.
- 1 Mutual aid society.

The meetings held:—12 preliminary, 19 ordinary and one general meeting to approve «votes» and to elect the Permanent Committee.

During this period two solemn meetings were held: one for the inauguration of the Congress, held on the 12th. of July, with the President of the Republic as Chairman, and attendance of his Cabinet, the Hon. Diplomatic and Consular Corps, Commissions from the Chamber of Deputies, from the Senate, and from the Supreme Court of Justice of the Nation; and the other, to-night, with the Secretary of Industry and Commerce in the chair; 4 festivities of different kinds; 2 visits to Institutions related to Commerce (the Y. M. C. A. and the Industrial Technological Museum), and 7 lectures on different subjects, all of them of great importance to the life and development of our commerce, respectively organized by the National University of Mexico, the Geographic and Statistic Society and the Mexican Popular University.

The Board of Directors of this Congress were elected by secret ballot at the first preliminary session, the result being as follows:

Chairman:—Mr. Francisco M. González, of Tampico.

1st. Vice-Chairman:—Mr. Carlos Arellano, of Mexico.

2nd. Vice-Chairman:—Mr. Adolfo G. Silva, of Oaxaca.

General Secretary:—Eng. Vicente G. de Quevedo, of Mexico.

1st. Secretary of the records:—Mr. Pedro V. Rincón, of Guadalajara.

2nd. Secretary of the records:—Lic. Eduardo Mestre, of Puebla.

Treasurer:—Mr. Melchor Ayala, of Mexico.

At the second preliminary session, the Board of Directors had the honour to propose, with the unanimous applause of the Assembly, the appointments of Honorary Chairman and 1st. and 2nd. Vice-Chairmen, in view of the unquestionable merits of the persons concerned, in favour of Messrs.

Venustiano Carranza, President of the Republic, Eng. Alberto J. Pani and Eng. León Salinas, Secretary the former and Assistant Secretary the latter, of the Department of Industry and Commerce.

At this same meeting and as prescribed by the rules, the Chairmen of the sessions were appointed, with the following result:

Mr. Francisco Alvarez, representing the Chamber of Commerce of Mérida.

Mr. Arnulfo Peralta, representing the Chamber of Commerce of Guaymas, Son.

Mr. Gregorio Cortina Basadre, representing the Tampico Agricultural and Industrial Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Guillermo Wholer, representing the Chamber of Commerce of Mazatlán, Sin.

Mr. Diego Santacruz, representing the Chamber of Commerce of Veracruz.

Mr. Eduardo Mestre, representing the Chamber of Commerce and Mexican Industrial Center of Puebla.

Mr. Castulo R. Chávez, representing the Chamber of Commerce of Chihuahua.

Mr. Bruno Newman, representing the Chamber of Commerce of Aguascalientes.

Mr. Juan Lafarga Aragón, representing the Chamber of Commerce of San Luis Potosí.

Mr. Juan B. Sahagun, representing the Chamber of Commerce of La Laguna District.

Mr. Roberto Garza Cabello, representing the Chamber of Commerce of Saltillo.

Mr. Manuel Ibarguengoitia, representing the Municipal Council of Zacatecas.

Mr. Arturo E. Padilla, representing the National Chamber of Commerce of Monterrey, and

Mr. Pedro V. Rincón, representing the Chamber of Commerce of Guadalajara.

Lastly, as during the course of the sessions it became evident that the Secretary's office was labouring under a superabundance of work, it was proposed and resolved to appoint two assistant secretaries, Messrs. Arturo E. Padilla and Federico Compean being designated to the posts.

The studies presented to this Congress by the Hon. Board of Directors of the National Chamber of Commerce of the City of Mexico, to serve, as prescribed by the Rules, as a starting point for the work of the Congress, were the following:

Measures that should be adopted to counteract a possible abnormal rise in articles of prime necessity, by Messrs. José Arce and Melchor Ayala.

The joint organization of the Chambers of Commerce of the Republic for the purpose of mutually imparting aid to one another, for public utility, and for representation before the Federal Government, by Messrs. Luis Ludert y Rul and Eng. Vicente G. de Quevedo.

A legal study on the organization of the Federal Chamber of Commerce of Mexico, by Lic. Carlos F. Uribe.

Measures to be put in practice for the purpose of developing commerce both at home and abroad, by Messrs. Manuel Bravo, Carlos B. Zetina and Luis Barroso Arias.

Initiative for the establishment of a Mexican Commercial Bank, by Messrs. Agustín Legorreta and Francisco González.

A project for the development of ways of communication as the most efficient means of giving impulse to commerce both at home and abroad, by Messrs. José Arce and Juan P. Robertson.

Commercial Schools, by Eng. Manuel Covarrubias y Acevedo.

The moralization of the Merchant, by Messrs. Juan M. Contreras, Manuel H. San Juan and Sealtiel Alatríste.

All these studies were printed and distributed in due time among the delegates, in order that they might become familiar with them before being brought up for discussion.

Other documents were also printed which it appeared pertinent and useful to circulate, as for instance the Communication from the Department of Industry and Commerce to the Chamber of Commerce proposing the convening of this Congress; the addresses delivered by Eng. Alberto J. Pani and Mr. Francisco M. González on the occasion of the solemn opening of the Congress; the address by Mr. Santa Ana Almada H., in connection with the visit which the Delegates made to the Industrial Technological Museum; the speech delivered by the Secretary of Industry and Commerce at the Banquet given by the Chamber of Commerce, and a request made to the Delegates that they furnish timely information every six months for the purpose of forming Commercial Statistics. For the intelligence of the members to this Congress, an interesting report on «German Chamber of Commerce Associations» (Deutscher Handelstag) was translated from the English and a reproduction was made of the report on the Congress of Corporations of Lyon, which the Mexican Chargé d'Affaires sent the Department under whose auspices all these publications were made. It may therefore be seen, that no efforts were omitted to insure the work undertaken by the Congress every probability of success.

It is befitting for me to state that all the printing expenses and those incidental on the convening of the Congress, were liberally defrayed by the Department of Industry and Commerce.

During the sessions of the Congress many other studies on the subjects already mentioned and on other points as well, were presented, and will appear in detail in the Records of the Congress.

The Committees appointed to report on the studies referred to were as follows:

Mr. Juan M. Contreras
Mr. Arnaldo Portillo
Mr. Federico Contreras
Mr. J. J. Jiménez
Mr. Manuel Ibarra

Committee on Articles of Prime Necessity:

Mr. Ramón J. de la Vega,
 Doctor Adolfo Ferrer,
 Mr. Ignacio Cardoso,
 Mr. Julio Castrillón,
 Mr. Julián Tron,
 Mr. Arturo E. Padilla,
 Mr. Adolfo G. Silva, and
 Mr. Francisco Arenas Pérez.

***Committee on the Development of Commerce at Home and Abroad
 and Ways of Communication:***

Mr. José Arce,
 Mr. Juan P. Robertson,
 Lic. Eduardo Mestre,
 Mr. Francisco Alvarez,
 Mr. Diego Santacruz,
 Mr. Arnulfo Peralta, and
 Eng. Leopoldo Palacios.

Committee on General Matters:

Mr. Rafael Fuentes,
 Mr. Tomás Pacheco, and
 Mr. J. María Raz.

Committee on the Moralization of the Merchant:

Mr. Juan M. Contreras,
 Mr. Arnulfo Peralta,
 Mr. Federico Compean,
 Mr. J. Jimenez Aldana, and
 Mr. Manuel Ibarguengoitia.

Financial Committee:

Mr. Carlos Arellano,
Lic. Eduardo Mestre,
Mr. Francisco Alvarez, and
Mr. Alberto Henkel.

Committee on the Organization of Chambers of Commerce:

Mr. Arnulfo Peralta,
Mr. Pedro V. Rincon,
Lic. Eduardo Mestre,
Mr. Francisco Alvarez,
Mr. Arturo E. Padilla,
Mr. J. Maria Raz,
Mr. Diego Santacruz,
Mr. Guillermo Wholer,
Mr. Luis Ludert y Rul, and
Eng. Vicente G. de Quevedo.

Committee on organization of Commercial Schools:

Mr. Andres Osuna,
Mr. Fernando Diez Barroso,
Doctor Alfonso Pruneda,
Eng. Manuel Covarrubias y Acevedo, and
Mr. Alberto Islas.

Committee on Legal Matters:

Lic. Carlos F. Uribe,
Lic. J. Lorenzo Cossio, and
Lic. Enrique Ballesteros.

It was thought necessary also to appoint a «Central Committee entrusted with all things relative to the importation

of corn», for this Committee to attend to everything connected with so important a matter. The members are as follows: Mr. Luis Ludert y Rul, as Chairman, and Messrs. Francisco González, Carlos Arellano, Juan M. Contreras, Alberto Henkel, Melchor Ayala, Manuel Bravo, Carlos F. Uribe, Agustín Legorreta, Bruno Newman, Federico Compean, Alberto Islas, Pedro V. Rincón, Castulo R. Chávez, and José M. Raz.

A «Committee for the organization of a Commercial Bank» was also appointed, the subject being regarded as one of vital importance: the following gentlemen make up this committee:

Chairman: Francisco M. González.

First Vice-Chairman: Agustín Legorreta.

Second Vice-Chairman: Carlos Arellano.

Members:

Eng. Bruno Newman.

F. J. Dunkerly.

E. L. Beck,

Alberto Henkel,

Federico Gagna,

Vicente Vertiz,

Tomás Sansano,

Carlos B. Zetina,

Manuel Bravo,

Edwin W. Sours,

Luis Ludert y Rul,

D. Muirhead,

Wm. H. Mealy,

Supply members:

Francisco J. Alvarez,

Francisco A. Díaz,

Doctor Adolfo Ferrer,

Arnulfo Peralta,

Arturo E. Padilla,

Adolfo G. Silva,

Gumersindo G. Rocha,

Fernando Díez Barroso,
 Juan P. Robertson,
 Enrique Díaz Conti,
 Pedro V. Rincón,
 Lic. Eduardo Mestre,
 Lic. Enrique M. Ballesteros,
 José María Raz.

*Committee entrusted with the study of the practical way of
 moralizing commerce.*

Mr. Juan M. Contreras,
 Mr. Manuel H. San Juan,
 Mr. Sealtiel L. Alatríste,
 Eng. Vicente G. de Quevedo,
 Lic. Carlos F. Uribe,
 Doctor Alfonso Pruneda,

Your attention should be called to the fact that, although this Congress was convened for the purpose of fundamentally studying the questions submitted by the Department of Industry and Commerce, practically it became necessary to extend its sphere of action and at times even to convert it into a veritable executive Assembly, which took it upon itself to immediately put into practice some matters of vital importance, as for instance greater supplies of corn and the establishment of a Commercial Bank, for which purpose, as has already been stated, there were at once appointed Committees who were entrusted with the organization and management of such work. On the other hand, hardly a day passed but telegrams, communications and initiatives were received from different parts of the Republic, requesting that certain matters of interest be brought with earnest activity before various Departments of State, things which were attended to through the relative Committees.

Moreover the Congress has named a «Permanent Committee» which shall zealously watch the due fulfilment of the various resolutions passed by the Assembly. This Committee which undoubtedly will be the continuation of the work undertaken by the Congress, is formed as follows: Chairman: Mr. Alberto Henkel. First Vice-Chairman: Doctor Alfonso Pruneda. Second Vice Chairman: Mr. Carlos Arellano. Secretary: Lic. Eduardo Mestre. Treasurer: Mr. Melchor Aya. la. Members: Messrs. Eng. Vicente G. de Quevedo, Eng. Manuel Covarrubias Acevedo, Lic. José Lorenzo Cossío, Eng. Bruno Newman, Broker Alberto Islas, Juan de M. Contre-ras, Federico Gagna, Pedro V. Rincón, Juan P. Robertson, Esteban S. Castorena, Emilio M. de la Garza and Adolfo Christlieb.

I have endeavoured to condense into this report everything that may serve to give an idea of the great and important problems discussed in this Congress, every one for which involves unquestionable consequence to the welfare and prosperity of the country; it being materially impossible, within so limited a space, to give a detailed account of all the studies, initiatives, and discussions which came up in connection with each one of the different subjects, and much less to expound their object, the adequate means of carrying them into effect and the scope of the latter.

The subjects that have been dealt with and discussed are of a commercial and of an economico-social order, and although taken separately they may differ very much one from another, when taken together they are intimately connected one with the other, like the links of a chain; and this chain, be it noted, Gentlemen, is the «economical welfare of the country». If one of the links be broken, the union, the resistance and the efficacy become destroyed; the proper solution to any one for the problems discussed helps the solution of all the rest, as also may a blunder committed in any single case prove prejudicial to all the others. Fortunately this work will not fall to pieces, because the authors of the propositions

presented, the conscientious work of the Reporting Committees, the very careful discussion which those propositions originated, so much so that the sessions of the Congress had to be extended four days longer, and finally the pains that every one of us will take to put into practice the resolutions passed, guarantee its integrity.

The echo of the important subjects discussed in the course of our meetings has been heard throughout all the sections of the country, eliciting a most lively interest and sympathy.

Its resonance has reached beyond our boundaries creating new friendly and commercial relations with important Chambers of Commerce in North America.

Mr. Secretary:—

It is indeed a source of the greatest consolation to the country, still deeply agitated and perturbed in consequence of the Revolution, to witness the spectacle presented by this Congress, which the Government emanating from the Revolution has convened, through the Department of Industry and Commerce under your worthy charge, for the purpose of discussing and seeking a solution to most important commercial problems closely connected with the well being of the nation, thus giving an evident proof of a highly democratic, progressive and patriotic spirit.

Well may you be proud of having initiated the meeting of this First National Congress of Merchants, and the President of the Republic of having approved of it and lent it all his support. The work accomplished in the midst of the difficulties inherent in all collegiate bodies, is more than sufficient to affirm that the Assembly which to-day comes to a close will prove most beneficial to the country and to our international commercial relations, at this time so justly called «of national reconstruction.»

Gentlemen, Delegates to this Congress:

You too must feel satisfied. You abandoned your homes, your business and some of you even undertook a long and laborious journey to share the work with us. On returning to your homes you carry with you the deep satisfaction of having cooperated to a good work. It is true that you did not solely confine yourselves to throw light upon the subjects which ought to have been preferently studied; but you did so with the same good faith and the same pains, to work for the common good, thinking you could not let escape the opportunity of finding assembled from all parts of the country, intelligent men who possess a profound knowledge of the various commercial problems. I desire particularly to offer you my deep congratulations, and I think the whole Nation too congratulates itself, on having in the course of your work devoted special attention to the transcendent question of moralizing everything relating to commercial transactions, relations and movement. Therein are vinculated interests of every kind, political and social, on which general welfare depends. We all wish and trust that this Assembly may be instrumental in bringing about, so far as may be necessary, an improvement in the conduct of all who directly or indirectly are responsible for the development and security of commerce and the prosperity of the country.

In closing, I beg of you to join with me in making from the bottom of our hearts a solemn vow, a firm promise, that: in the same way that we have worked with all due diligence for our Country, during this Congress which comes to-day to a close, in the same way will we continue the work with still greater zest, with all enthusiasm, with all the intelligence at our command, with all our love.

Mexico, August the 14th. 1917,

VICENTE G. DE QUEVEDO.

**Address delivered by Eng. León Salinas, Assistant Subsecretary
of the Department of Industry and Commerce, at the so-
lemn closing of the Congress.**

Mr. Secretary of Industry and Commerce,

Gentlemen Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is my privilege to be present at the closing of the First National Congress of Merchants, having been honoured with the commission to tender to all its members the congratulations of the Department of Industry and Commerce upon the efficacy and ability with which they have discussed the difficult subjects submitted to their deliberation and study. Most sincerely also is it to be trusted that great prudence and sound judgment have prompted the resolutions which have been adopted and that they may soon become a reality, thus contributing to the reorganization of the country in harmony with the ideals pursued by the great Revolution which we have gone through, and first victorious stage of which is about to close: that is, peace and prosperity based on justice, to the benefit of the largest possible number of citizens. In this reorganization, Gentlemen Delegates, you must take a principal part constituting as you do the body commercial, which is one of the three great activities that support civilized humanity.

These three activities, to produce, to manufacture, and to exchange, are of such great importance that it would not be possible nor just to grant one supremacy over the others. Great merchants have been as necessary to civilization as great farmers and great industrials nor have they been inferior to great captains. The names of merchants such as the Medicis, Doria and Marco Polo are intimately connected with the most brilliant and prosperous epochs of the Italian Republics of the Renaissance. The commercial enterprises of the Dutch and the English have powerfully contributed to establish the supremacy of their respective countries, and the North-American and German merchants have proved most valuable agents of the sway and greatness of the United States of America and of Germany.

From the Neolithic times down to our own days civilization has always followed in the wake of commerce. Ideas unable to penetrate into a country on the point of the sword of the conqueror have made their way among the bales of the merchant. The Phenicians from Sidon as a help to their commercial enterprises, took some of the elements of the Egyptian hieratic writing and therewith formed their wonderful alphabet which having spread over the whole region of the Mediterranean, Arabia and India, was the origin of all the alphabets of the civilized languages, that is, it laid the foundations of universal culture. This culture has had illustrious defenders and propagators among merchants, in every age: two of whom, the Genoese Doria and the Catalunian Roger de Flor, were the last champions who in the East endeavoured to maintain Christian civilization, swept away by the sanguinary imposition of Islamism.

In our vast country, when ways of communication did not exist or were even hardly traced, merchants, undertaking journeys which lasted whole months, enduring a thousand hardships, challenging the audacity of highwaymen and the fury of the savage indians, powerfully contributed to the growth of the colony then in swaddling clothes and supplied

every thing that was needed in the settlements scattered between the two seas, from the calid regions of Chiapas to the penitentiaries established in the solitary and arid section of the North. And during the Spanish domination commerce afforded perceptible comfort to the inhabitants of New Spain furnishing them at all times, at moderate prices, with the products of the country, with European goods and exotic merchandise from Asia. In our own times, thanks to the activity of commerce, the humblest of our homes is able to bedeck its table with products from the five parts of the world with relative facility.

If the importance of commerce was so great in ancient and is even greater in modern times, if it is destined to place within the reach of man numerous elements which preserve and make life attractive, if in its manifold and complex work it needs the cooperation of all the social classes and of millions of individuals, in one word if its functions are so indispensable and transcendental, it should not be foreing to a task whose unselfish aim is to infuse new life into a people, but should necessarily lend a helping hand in the work of reconstruction and of setting again on its feet a country which as a consequence of a political and social cataclism, symptomatic of the development of every new people who by itself works out an autonomous existence, has momentarily detained its march to progress and feels that the factors whereof it is composed are out of balance.

The fact of this Congress of Merchants having met is a flat contradiction to pessimists, and to those who blinded by a mistaken or an unwholesome passion, or writhing under the suffering of transitory material injuries, have branded as dissolvent the revolutionary movement in which some of us have taken an active part and others have been simple spectators. From all parts of the Republic, from Yucatan to Lower California, bearing the representation of many different activities, from the retail merchant to the representative of commerce on an important scale, combining the practi-

cal experience of life with the lofty ideals, perhaps utopic but never withered, of those who have spent part of their lives on the benches of the school-room and now in those same schools occupy the much respected chair of the professor, a numerous group of individuals gladly responding to an invitation from the National Government, have fraternally gathered together, forgetting that yesterday many perhaps were separated by profound differences of opinions or placed face to face with one another by conflicting material interests; and full of faith and enthusiasm work together for the accomplishment of a common end, the reconstruction of the country, of a country provident for all who contribute to its construction, and which, being their own work, they will assuredly always know how to defend when its existence or its tranquility become endangered.

From now onward Mexico must no longer be the legendary horn of plenty to encourage the idleness of a group of favourites, who at the hour of general distress emigrate to foreign lands to malign their own brothers, not having had themselves the sufficient courage personally to struggle to work out their nation's welfare.

Although the benefits which are derived from great social upheavals are not immediate, we can to day flatter ourselves that, spiritually at least, our integration has already begun, and an integral organism never fails to make progress and to prosper.

Among the subjects submitted to your deliberation three set out conspicuously by their transcendental importance, not only as regards the body commercial but also the community as a whole. I refer to the work of moralization, to the necessary measures to be instituted to avert a possible scarcity of and an immoderate rise in articles of prime necessity, and the freight problem.

The great Revolution that has shaken the country and which the conservative forces of our society in spite of their strength were unable to quell, is a most eloquent indication

of the deficiency of our social organization, of the urgent need in which it stands of certain modification if fresh political and social upheavals are to be averted, if the new edifice of our nationality is to be built upon immovable foundations and finally, if the great prosperity whereonto we are invited by the enormous sources of wealth latent in the soil of Mexico, is to be attained.

We must not marvel at the imperfect organization of our society, it being the necessary consequence of the different factors which have contributed to its composition. From time immemorial a minority, more daring than intelligent, has succeeded in exploiting to its own benefit the great mass of the population, and in point of fact there have only existed two social classes, the dominators who possessed every thing and had the power to accomplish every thing, and the variously exploited who neither possess anything nor have the power to accomplish anything and while not openly being denied their rights for the sake of covering the appearances of legality, were on the other hand everlastingly disappointed. How long have we been told, and under what circumstances has it not been said, that the millions of illiterate natives that people our territory are an obstacle to civilization, that it is on their account that our institutions cannot be rendered stable, that they are to blame for the impossibility of establishing a democratic Government? But the truth of the matter is, Gentlemen, that these natives who for whole centuries lived like MACEHUALES in the hands of their chieftains, like slaves under the Spanish agents (*encomenderos*), like everlasting minors under the charity of missionaries and the magnanimity of a few Spanish monarchs, and as vile beasts of burden in the hands of soulless exploiters in more recent times, if on the one hand they constitute a negative element because of their ignorance, for which they are not the blame, on the other hand they are less responsible than the creoles and half-breeds who, being constituted in the directing class, have neglected their own moral education far more urgent and necessary than that of the native masses who are much more docile and adaptable.

For the security of peace and the establishment of democracy, honesty rather than wisdom is required; moral improvement rather than intellectual development; the practice of civic virtues rather than scientific and literary accomplishments.

It is not indeed certain bodies alone but all our institutions that need to be moralized; from the public administration, which the Dictatorship bequeathed to us by no means little viciated, down to the family dismembered by the most elemental sentiments of duty being banished to oblivion. The problem as a whole is gigantic; but if each institution and each separate body exert themselves, contributing each their share, not only with the faith and enthusiasm which a noble cause must inspire, but also with the perseverance to which we are bound by the supreme necessity of preserving our own existence, the task is feasible and can be carried out in little time. Most patriotic therefore has been the work of the relative Committee of the Congress of Merchants and most laudable the attitude of the members when expressing to it their adhesion.

The solution of the immediate problem of supplying articles of prime necessity to the whole country, deserved as was to be expected preferential attention on the part of the Congress. Assuredly none better than the merchants are in a position to seek and point out the most adequate solution to avert an imminent crisis, which as an unavoidable consequence of a long struggle which had necessarily to reduce the productive power of our markets, has become aggravated by the recent manifestations of the gigantic world conflict. The question although an arduous one, is yet susceptible of solution; but it requires above all strong doses of morality, and the Government of the Republic firmly convinced that the national body commercial is identified with its unselfish eagerness for the public welfare, is confident that the Chambers of Commerce throughout the country will work in unison to carry out the resolutions that have been passed and will be

ever ready to check by means of commercial proceedings, which are more efficient than penal measures, any attempt at unwholesome speculation with public needs.

The perfect success and the unlimited prosperity of commerce are intimately connected with a good system of transportation, which unfortunately in our country is very deficient both as to organization and to service. Amongst us there are hardly any highroads in the vicinity of the important cities and at a little distance from the latter all trace of roads has disappeared, a fact revealing the most punishable negligence. Our incipient railroad network does not answer the necessities of the country, and it is only through the unquestionable and sublime virtues of the Indo-Latin race that a platonic patriotism has spiritually maintained the Mexican family strongly united together, notwithstanding that the material interests created by the insane railroad policy of the Dictatorship encouraged the disintegration of our domestic commercial relations. The commercial capitals of many States of the Federation are to be found beyond our frontiers. The lack of rapid, sure and easy ways of communication, has deprived the country of prosperity in many sections which to day are direct tributaries of foreigners to the detriment of national wealth.

The objet of great Mexican railroads has been no other than to promote international commerce, very useful no doubt in itself but not so much as domestic interchange; and we consequently witness the spectacle of sections under the scourge of famine turning their eyes to foreign markets, while, with only a mountain intervening, vast districts in the country, veritable granaries, are compelled to burn the surplus of an old and abundant crop to make room for the new one, because the want of rapid and cheap ways of communication prevent its being shipped out from the producing center.

When Lower California, Sonora, Sinaloa and the Nayarit District, Yucatán, Campeche and Tabasco become connected

with the center of the country by an iron-belt of railroad, symbolic of commercial bonds, as creating lasting and indestructible interests, national unification will become a reality and in proportion as commercial wealth shall considerably increase, the effective strength of the whole nation shall also become very much greater. When the rich districts on the Pacific coast, Autlán, la Huasteca, Valle del Balsas, Tabasco and las Mixtecas shall have free access to the markets of the interior, the spectre of a general famine shall be for ever banished from amongst us and we shall no longer be tributaries of the foreigner in order merely to preserve our existence. Commerce following its traditions can continue its meritorious work of civilization and promotion of welfare, among us, giving it all the impulse possible, and from which it will be the first to reap the benefits; and joyous in its independence, without expecting, as is the pernicious habit among us, the assistance of the Government, will march at the vanguard of the great conquests of human activities.

The organization of other Chambers of Commerce in the Districts where none exist at present, and the Confederation of all of them, will give the whole body great power and respectability, as concerning commercial matters there will exist an intelligent and honest direction, the members of the Chambers being assuredly chosen from among the most select and honourable businessmen, who will always be before the eyes of the Nation and the Government and who know that they are set up as models for all whose interests they manage.

The present Government of the Republic, faithful to its origin and consistent with the principles of the revolution which it led, has not wanted authoritatively to legislate on commercial matters without first listening to its most conspicuous representatives. For this purpose was this Congress convened and different subjects submitted to its deliberation. The Government has full confidence in your honorability, knowledge and experience, and knows that while protecting

your own personal interests you will also work on behalf of the whole body commercial, constituting as it does an integral and valuable part of the country. Among the natural laws which govern the course of events, there are certain economic principles—a simple expression of the relations which connect one phenomenon with another—which may not be violated with impunity. When merchants, despising some of those laws make no account of them, they wield a dangerous two edged sword capable of mortally wounding them; and when a Government is the one to violate those same laws, it runs the risk of arriving at consequences diametrically opposed to what it had in view. The revolutionary Government in abnormal and temporary instances was forced to dictate certain dispositions with regard to commerce, which were regarded excessively severe, but which the extraordinary conditions under which the country and its institutions were at the time labouring, so demanded. In analogous cases, past and present Governments have resorted to identical measures: we know that nations of unquestionable culture like Germany, or most liberally instituted like England, have resolved upon measures rigorous to the extreme in view of the exceptional circumstances under which they had to be taken.

The Executive of the Union, desirous of doing but what is right and proper, has requested your advice and has given you the most ample liberty to study, discuss and propose whatever may be conducive to the promotion of your interests. Duly estimating your competency and your loyal and noble intentions, it will most readily accept your initiatives, will study with very careful attention all your «resolutions,» and will be actuated by your ideas; and ever having in view the prosperity of the country, which means your prosperity also, will endeavour to remove every obstacle to the end that commercial transactions be developed and prosper to the fullest possible extent, bearing in mind the words of Benjamin Constant that «commerce can live only by liberty.»

Return, Gentlemen Delegates, to your homes and to your

business occupations with the peace of mind with which the satisfaction of duty done fills an honest conscience; be pleased to accept the congratulations and the gratitude of the Government of the Nation. And if, as is to be hoped and as all of us so desire it, an era of reconstruction, of prosperity and happiness is in near store for our country, and as a just reward to your intelligence, to your exertions, to your devotion to work, your business prospers and your fortunes and wellbeing increase, do not forget your collaborators who, although in a humbler sphere, are labouring too and also have a right to prosperity.

Now, if you endeavour by your example and by a well understood cooperation that the thousands of individuals engaged in commerce should obtain only that gain which is their just due; if you strive constantly to raise the moral and intellectual standard of your subordinates suitably distributing the different tasks among them in order to form specialists and thus improve commercial proceedings, and you do not stint your assistance to the Government and to other social classes who together with that to which you belong, should march happily united as integral parts of a whole which may not be divided without bringing about the most serious consequences, you will succeed in procuring for Mexican commerce the characteristics of that great commerce whose origin is the division of labour, that holds liberty as a principle, equity as its foundation, and whose sole object is universal welfare.

Mexico, D. F., August the 4th. 1917.

LEÓN SALINAS.

Toast proposed by Eng. Alberto J. Pani, Secretary of Industry and Commerce, at the banquet given by the Board of Directors of the National Chamber of Commerce of the city of Mexico to the Delegates to the Congress.

Gentlemen:

I am requested by the President of the Republic to convey to each and all of you his most cordial greetings and to express his deep appreciation of the courteous invitation to this banquet, extended to him by the National Chamber of Commerce of Mexico, together with his regrets at his inability to be present on this occasion. Having fulfilled the commission entrusted to me, and as the Presidential Representation weighs so heavily upon my shoulders and overwhelms me to the extent of almost rendering me speechless, I shall again assume my modest personality and proceed . . . on my own account.

I had the good fortune—which I now declare with immense satisfaction and delight—of having had the opportunity of producing two contacts and thereby two currents: the one of mutual understanding, the other of affection and sympathy.

The first contact is, so to speak, not material, yet fruitful in benefits to a whole people: a contact between abstractions called «Government of the Republic» and «National Commerce». The mere contact between these two entities having taken place amidst an explosion of enthusiasm—a sure omen that that gust of fraternity shall sweep away the secular mutual hatred and rancour of our classes everlastingly at logger-

heads with one another,—promises well for the revival of a reinstated, sound, and great country. It matters not whether the discussions sustained within the National Congress of Merchants deviated from the path of order, sometimes degenerating in disputes; neither are the momentary despondency of some nor the overflowing lyricisms of others of any account; it is not of any moment either that at times may have been forgotten the parable which I took the liberty of referring to you on the occasion of another banquet, and that the Congress should have been lavish of its generosity proffering advice in excess of what was asked for. . . .

Apropos of this, as the Congress perhaps for this reason has found it necessary to extend its sessions over another week, it might not be amiss now to open a parenthesis in order to repeat the parable—as repetition always helps to fortify the memory or to convince—not however without first quoting the words of Jesus Christ: «He who hath ears let him hear», and those others of eloquent popular wisdom: «To a clear understanding little need be said».

«Satan was criticizing God—says the parable—for having created advice, that impertinent personage indiscreet and obstinate, which is of no earthly use and makes the faithful servants of God the laughing stock of others. Make no confusion and remember—answered the Holy Spirit—that I created the advice that is asked for and thou the one that is given».

Closing the parenthesis, and with all due apologies, I shall proceed. . . . I was saying, in short, that neither the disorder occasioned by the passing excess of enthusiasm, nor the mistakes originating from inexperience, nor the pathological pessimism which infest the soul and kills ideals, nor the optimism, pathological too, which only builds castles in the air, nor the advice which has not been asked for, even though it come from Satan, should be a cause for discouragement; in spite of all this and much more which possibly might happen, I hold to my indestructible confidence, I feel satisfied, and I

congratulate you upon the work you have accomplished. The reason is that the contact between the Government and the Body Commercial has been made and therefrom shall spring the spark that will indicate the Mexican people the road which leads to the Promised Land.

The second contact is material and was produced by effusive handshakes between the representatives of Commerce from over all the Republic, who had never met before and who assembled here to celebrate the First National Congress of Merchants. The current of friendship thus established will contribute a great deal more to consolidate and harmonize the commercial interests of the country than six months of commercial correspondence.

I likewise congratulate myself upon having brought you in contact with the President of the Republic, who has shaken hands with you with his characteristic frankness. I firmly believe that the Government would gain immensely throughout the whole country, if all the inhabitants were to become acquainted with him as you have been. I think that it would gain a great deal abroad too, if they at least knew over there that Mr. Carranza has a human figure. This reminds me of an anecdote:—

«An American in New York was seeking information on Mexico from a foreigner, who like many others, had suffered from the consequences of the Revolution. Speaking of the men of the Revolution the American asked:—

«Who is general Zapata?»

«A bandit chief», answered the foreigner.

«And general Villa?»

«Another bandit chief».

«And general so and so?»

«Another bandit chief».

«And general this and general that?»

«Other bandit chiefs».

«And general Carranza?»

«Oh! he is the First Chief!»

Yes, Gentlemen, during the struggle he was the Chief of many patriots and of many bandits too, because armed revolutions are made with armies that kill and destroy and not with choirs of archangels. And now, as President of the Republic, he is the Chief of many functionaries, employees and servants of the Nation, both honest and patriotic, and he may also be the Chief of certain bandits, because the work of moralization cannot be accomplished as by magic in one instant.

But Mr. Carranza professes the theory, constantly corroborated by the history of humanity, that social institutions can only be durable and prosperous when supported upon bases of the strictest morality. That is the reason why the first subject included in the programme which the Government submitted to the consideration of the Congress of Merchants, refers to the moralization of the merchant. That is also why the irresistible strength of character of Mr. Carranza resisted all the calamities entailed by the struggle, like a mass of granit, like an immovable mountain; and his triumph signifies the political purification of the revolutionary organism, which is the necessary preparation and beginning—as I have stated on another occasion—of the moral purification which the present Government most zealously pursues.

I therefore drink, Gentlemen, that the sparks produced by the contacts which I have had the good fortune to bring about, may kindle a new sun of fraternity and justice to shine upon and give warmth and life to the enfeebled people of Mexico.

ALBERTO J. PANI.

FIRST NATIONAL CONGRESS OF MERCHANTS



Mr. Francisco M. González, Chairman of the Congress.



ABSTRACTS OF PAPERS READ AT THE CONGRESS

THE MORALIZATION OF COMMERCE, by Messrs. Juan de M. Contreras, Manuel H. San Juan and Sealtiel Alatríste.

The Spanish conquerors and the "agents" (*encomenderos*) of those days were actuated by an immoderate lust of gain, which the Laws of the Indies (*Leyes de las Indias*) barely succeeded in restraining. Our colonial commerce was organized upon a basis of monopoly, and our present condition is still affected by those ancient evils. The deficiency in the moral education, and the want of culture, of our lower classes should also be taken into consideration.

Frauds upon the Treasury.—The most important are: contraband, concealment of actual sales, inaccurate statements of capital stock, and keeping double sets of books. Provision is made against these crimes under our penal laws and they may be prevented by means of an efficient administration of justice.

Immoralities committed to the detriment of the consumer.—Such are principally as follows: counterfeiting, usurpation and simulation of trade-marks; adulteration and supplanting of goods; the improper use of legal weights and measures and the fraudulent employment of inaccurate weights and measures; the simulation of the origin of goods; the practice of asking greater prices to obtain undue profit, when the customer raises no objection. A strict vigilance on the part of the authorities and raising the average standard of culture in the people will rid us of all those immoralities.

Immoralities between merchants themselves.—Above all the following should be noted: illicit competition; abuses and corruption to

be found among those who devote themselves to brokerage; lack of fulfilment of mutual obligations; and lastly, fraudulent bankruptcy. Perhaps by amplifying the precept of "disqualification", frauds between merchants themselves may to a certain extent be put a stop to.

Frauds upon clerks and employees.—Some only will be mentioned, viz: wages paid not in cash but in commodities (*tiendas de raya*); one-sided work-contracts; exiguous salaries and wages; demanding excessive work, and the usual want of fairness in regard to accidents occurring in the fulfilment of duty, and in regard to old age. A wise regulation of the clauses of the Constitution which refer to work may safeguard us from the frauds heretofore committed upon clerks, employees, and servants.

Frauds of different kinds.—Under this common title may be comprised the following: immoderate speculation; usury; commercial parasitism and haggling; finally, monopoly. By encouraging and multiplying co-operative societies, immoderate speculation will be prevented. Monopoly should be combated by the moralization of the directing classes.

THE MORALIZATION OF COMMERCE, by *Mr. Arturo E. Padilla*,
representing the Chamber of Commerce of Monterrey, N. L.

The Commercial Community of the country as a whole must not be branded as immoral. The Government will help immensely towards moralizing commercial transactions by keeping a constant watch on the Custom Houses and Railways staffs and by substituting incompetent and dishonest employees with able and honourable persons. Furthermore, in the appointment of such employees, politics must altogether be set aside.

THE MORALIZATION OF COMMERCE, by *Mr. José L. Cossío*.

Our laws in a certain sense are immoral on some matters. Not unfrequently fraudulent promoters of joint-stock companies escape

punishment. Under public health legislation no provision is made against the seller of adulterated articles provided he publicly advertises them as such. These immoralities in the law must be put a stop to at once. Our penal and our sanitary laws, the laws on patents and trade-marks, and that relative to joint-stock companies should be amended, because such as they now exist they give room to certain immoral transactions.

Under our laws also combinations and exportations at a loss for the purpose of artificially raising the price of goods are rendered possible; it is imperative that this state of things should be made to discontinue by enacting adequate laws to prevent the abuses alluded to.

Our legislation makes no provision for practically making the theft of cattle impossible. A manifold investigation as to the best way of putting an end to cattle-stealing and the transactions consequent thereon, would prove extraordinarily beneficial.

In order to study all these most important questions and gradually moralize our merchants by means of the process of «disqualification», steps should be taken to re-establish the commercial community.

THE MORALIZATION OF RAILROADMEN, by *Messrs. Jesús M. Espinosa, Amador E. Ugalde, Andrés Osuna, and A. A. Altamirano.*

Some of the most detestable abuses committed in our railroad lines can be prevented by the Department of Communications, issuing stern injunctions to the railroadmen under no circumstances whatsoever to alter the order in which freight cars should be furnished to the merchants. In the relative circular employees shall be warned that guilty parties shall be forthwith consigned to the penal authorities. The said circular shall be made extensive to engine drivers and to all other employees of the railroads, who when not given gratifications or tips abandon the trains on the road.

In order efficaciously to contribute to the end in view, it is absolutely necessary that the merchants of the Confederate Chambers of Commerce strictly abstain from offering tips.

A REGISTER TO BE KEPT BY THE CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE FOR THE PURPOSE OF INVESTIGATING THE MORALITY OF MERCHANTS, by *Mr. Juan Lafarga Aragón*.

For the encouragement of honourable merchants and in order to avoid that dishonourable ones should enjoy an unmerited reputation, it is desirable that the Chambers of Commerce throughout the Republic institute a register, wherein the following data shall be recorded:

- (a) The time that the party concerned has been in business;
- (b) His efficacy in the payment of taxes;
- (c) His commercial relations in so far as they concern his supplies and sales in general;
- (d) Whether or not he is prompt in meeting his obligations; whether he has at any time been in the hands of a receiver; and lastly,
- (e) His economic conditions and social relations.

A MEANS OF PREVENTING CERTAIN FRAUDS UPON THE TREASURY, by *Mr. Arnulfo Peralta*.

Frauds upon the Treasury should not be considered simply as crimes committed against the Government, but also as against all the contributors whose taxes and imposts are indirectly surcharged by the amount defrauded. Regarding a fraud very frequently committed, which consists in inaccurately stating the amounts of wholesale and retail sales, it would be advisable that the party concerned should make the said statements himself, solemnly and personally, so that his statements before the fiscal authorities should impress him with awe and respect. Moreover it would be desirable that the penalties imposed for false statements of sales, should be corporal. These crimes establish a sort of complicity between the merchant and his employees; when the latter rob or swindle their masters, the former cannot afford to accuse them before a court. Briefly, it would very much help to moralize the merchant, that the statements of capital and sales should be made solemnly, under word of honour; that fraudulent statements should

be punishable with arrest in cases of repetition of the offense, and that a special law on the subject based on a spirit of moderation should be enacted.

THE JOINT ORGANIZATION OF THE CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE OF THE REPUBLIC FOR THE PURPOSE OF MUTUALLY IMPARTING AID TO EACH OTHER, OF PUBLIC UTILITY, AND OF REPRESENTATION BEFORE THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, by *Mr. Luis Ludert y Rul*.

An excellent organization of the Chambers of Commerce of the Republic might be established for the purposes above expressed, under the following bases:

I.—The already existing Chambers shall be autonomous in regard to local matters; concerning those of general interest, they shall operate in accord with the Chamber of the City of Mexico, which shall become «The National or Federal Chamber of Commerce of Mexico».

II.—This Chamber shall represent before the Federal Authorities all the other Chambers established throughout the Country and its functions shall be principally those of representative and organizer.

III.—The local Chambers shall render the Mexico City Chamber efficient assistance in all matters of general interest.

IV.—The Chambers of Commerce established in the country, both national and foreign, in order to corroborate their mandate, may register as subscribers to the Chamber of Mexico.

A LEGAL STUDY ON THE ORGANIZATION OF THE NATIONAL FEDERAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF THE CITY OF MEXICO, by *Lic. Carlos F. Uribe*.

No provision is made under our laws preventing the Chamber of Commerce of the City of Mexico from becoming a National Federal Chamber of the Republic, and from its assuming the repre-

sentation of the interests of the commercial community throughout the country before the Federal Government. The political Constitution of 1917 grants the right of association and of peacefully gathering together for any legitimate purpose whatsoever (article 9). Under the law on Chambers of Commerce dated June 12th. 1908, the Chambers of Commerce are authorized to represent mercantile interests before the Government and to establish and maintain relations with the other Chambers; moreover, under fraction V of article 2 of the By-laws of the National Chamber of Commerce of the City of Mexico, the latter is authorized to act as representative, in its relations with the Federal Government and other public authorities, of the Chambers of Commerce and other commercial and industrial bodies, already or that hereafter be established in the Republic. So that, without amending the said By-laws nor transgressing any law, the Chamber of Commerce of Mexico has the right of assuming the representation of the National Chambers, and by so doing manifold advantages will accrue to the corporations represented and to the Commercial Community in general.

THE JOINT ORGANIZATION OF THE CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE, by *Eng. Vicente G. de Quevedo.*

The organization of Chambers of Commerce has proved a great success in other countries. It would be advisable that merchants should contribute a 2% on the amount they are now paying for their licenses, so as to place the Chambers of Commerce in a position to carry out their respective initiatives. This small contribution could be collected, as it is done in other countries, through the Treasury Department.

Besides the Central Chamber of Commerce in the City of Mexico, other principal chambers shall be established in the State capitals or in the most important commercial towns. In towns of certain commercial movement Regional Chambers and commercial agencies shall be established. The Chamber of Mexico shall act as intermediary between the Chambers of different States.

The Chambers of Commerce thus organized will render great services to Statistics. In their respective bulletins data shall be published relative to the production, prices, freight, &c. of the principal staples and manufactures of the region. Diagrams and

summaries of statistics shall be made annually. The Chambers of Commerce shall encourage commercial training.

The Chambers of Commerce shall act as advisory bodies in matters within their competency. The Chambers of Mexico shall assume the representation of the Commercial Community throughout the country. They shall have competent, technical and permanent representatives before the authorities. The Chamber of Mexico, when necessary, shall represent the chambers of State capitals.

THE JOINT ORGANIZATION OF THE CHAMBERS OF
COMMERCE OF THE REPUBLIC, by *Mr. Arturo E. Padilla*,
representing the Chamber of Commerce of Monterrey, N. L.

The Chambers of Commerce of the Republic should unite together under an intimate understanding. They should hold one or two general congresses yearly in the city of Mexico. They should establish in the capital of the Republic, well organized, permanent offices, whose business it shall be to initiate, watch, and transact, all things relative to Commerce, both in legislative matters or of any other kind, whether the subject be of general interest or only concerning a State Chamber of Commerce.

INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL, AND AGRICULTURAL PRO-
PAGANDA WORK ABROAD, by *Messrs. Esteban S. Castorena*
and *Julio Beltrán*, Delegates from the «Mutual Society of Com-
mercial Travellers.»

There is a belief abroad that owing to the recent political disturbances suffered in our country, only a very few Mexican firms and concerns are worthy to be trusted. In order to promote our national resources it is necessary that these erroneous ideas be dispelled. From 1910 to the present date the failures and judicial liquidations have been relatively few.

The Chamber of Commerce of Mexico is in a position, with the

assistance of the local Chambers and the Commercial Agencies, to form a register of responsible firms, which should be forwarded to the Foreign Chambers. Moreover, the services of the Mexican Consuls can be utilized in this just and patriotic work; through this channel all kinds of data can be made to reach foreign firms and commercial centers.

INTERVENTION OF THE CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE IN THE FORMATION OF LAWS GOVERNING THE REVENUE AND THE EXPENSES OF THE UNION (Budget), by *Messrs.* *Amador E. Ugalde, Pedro Fernández and Jesús M. Espinosa.*

For the purpose of extending and rendering more efficient the action of the Chambers of Commerce, it would be advisable to make all manner of additions and amendments to the law of June 1st. 1908, in order strictly to adjust thereto the operation of the afore mentioned institutions.

Greater equity undoubtedly would be attained in the distribution of taxes, if the Chambers of Commerce had a representative with the right of discussing and voting the formation of the budgets of the States of the Federation, as the said Chambers are intimately familiar with the necessities of Commerce and of Industry. Moreover, it would be a great advantage that the revenue estimates should be made known to the public, for in that way merchants who were not conformable thereto, would be able to take the measures to which they might have a right.

INTERVENTION OF THE CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE FOR THE PURPOSE OF FINDING THE MEANS TO AVERT DIFFICULTIES IN OBTAINING FOOD FOR THE POORER CLASSES, by *Messrs. Jesús H. Espinosa and Amador E. Ugalde.*

The task of finding the means to avert the famine which menaces our poorer classes has been entrusted to the Chambers of

Commerce. The latter should provide under their By-laws that one of the principal ends to be pursued by the Chambers shall be to resort to every means within their power to avert the famines with which we are visited.

The said Chambers, during times of shortage of the necessities for life, should keep a strict watch upon the sale of cereals and articles of prime necessity, the sale of which should be made strictly at cost price and with the greatest equity.

The local Chambers of Commerce should establish Rules and Regulations and polls of the sections comprised under their jurisdiction, so as to facilitate the distribution of food-stuffs and carefully prevent the speculation which merchants of bad faith might wish to carry on.

MEASURES THAT SHOULD BE INSTITUTED TO DEVELOP BOTH HOME AND FOREIGN TRADE, by *Messrs. Manuel Bravo, Carlos B. Zetina and Luis Barroso Arias.*

The European war on the one hand and our political situation during the past seven years on the other, are the cause of our commerce not developing as vigorously as might be expected. Our industrial production is called upon to supply the deficit in our importations, which are every day diminishing more and more. Our foreign trade will not fully develop until the present world struggle comes to an end.

As regards the growth of our home commerce, this is intimately connected with the solution of the financial problem (the want of specie); with the impulse of industry (which should substitute foreign industry the products of which we import less every day); with supplies of rolling stock (which we cannot obtain from the United States and which our great Mexican foundries can supply); with the moralization of the personnel in charge of the freight service; and with the facilities to be granted merchants for the payment, in the simplest and most equitable manner (without detriment to the interests of the Treasury), of the different taxes wherewith they are burdened.

INITIATIVE FOR PERFECTING THE COMMERCIAL STATISTICS OF MEXICO, by *Messrs. José Arce, Juan de M. Contreras, and Juan P. Robertson.*

In order to render our deficient commercial statistics as perfect as possible, the delegates to the First National Congress of Merchants should furnish all kinds of data relative to their respective localities, such as:

1.—The condition of the crops, twice a year, making a distinction between the good, the middling and the bad; the probable amount of the said crops; prices, local consumption, approximate surplus, and facilities of transportation.

2.—The industries exploited at the time, the annual production, and the prices of commodities and products.

3.—Local industries not in exploitation, pointing out the causes thereof (want of capital, deficient ways of communication, &c.)

4.—General conditions, as regards commerce, of the respective section, specifying the market prices of articles of prime necessity, for the purpose that these data be published in the Bulletin of the Chamber of Commerce, and thus contribute to facilitate the distribution and consumption of this class of resources.

IMPORTANCE OF GOOD STATISTICS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY, by *Mr. Adolfo Ferrer.*

The Secretary of Industry and Commerce recently requested the Governor of Tabasco to inform him regarding the amount of the stock of articles of prime necessity in that State. The Governor called a meeting of merchants and farmers, who realized the importance of statistic data in such cases. In default of such data one is altogether in the dark concerning agricultural and industrial production, and when an economic crisis is to be averted, it is almost impossible to proceed with the necessary wisdom.

The first steps therefore must necessarily be taken in so important a matter, submitting to the Secretary of Industry and Commerce the legal precepts which should govern commercial and agricultural statistics.

THE ORGANIZATION OF REGIONAL EXHIBITIONS AND COMMERCIAL MUSEUMS, by *Mr. Ambrosio Escudero*.

One of the causes which hinders the development both of our home and foreign trade is the knowledge we lack of the agricultural and industrial products of different sections of the country, and the complete ignorance that other countries live in with regard to such data.

The Department of Industry and Commerce is in a position to fill this want by organizing, and that with little expense, regional exhibitions of agricultural and industrial products and granting diplomas and rewards to the exhibitors who prove themselves worthy thereof.

Regarding foreign countries and particularly our neighbour to the North, with whom our commercial relations are closer, commercial museums should be established in the cities bordering with the United States (such as Ciudad Juárez). In those museums the most varied of our agricultural and industrial products could be exhibited, and as the cities referred to are frequently visited by North-American merchants, further commercial relations can be entered into by this means.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A «COMMERCIAL AGENCY AND INFORMATION BUREAU OF THE MEXICAN REPUBLIC,» by *Messrs. Jorge Prieto Laurens and Fernando Saldaña Galván*.

The Delegation from the Congress of Students and the International Americanist Association, submit to the Congress of Merchants an initiative for the establishment of a «Commercial Agency and Information Bureau of the Mexican Republic.»

The patriotic aims of this Institution are self-evident.

The Commercial Agency and Information Bureau shall be a private enterprise for the purpose of fomenting our commercial relations with other countries, particularly Spanish-American. An industrial and commercial museum, containing commercial products and statistic data, shall be established in the city of Mexico. Its

business shall be to gather from both the national and foreign Chambers of Commerce all kinds of data, references, samples, &c., necessary to the advancement of our commerce. The foreign consuls shall be requested their cooperation and a commercial atlas shall be formed, specifying the import and export markets and all kinds of indications relative to the subject. The Agency shall act as intermediary between Mexican and foreign merchants. Any financial question that may arise shall be discussed in the National Section of the Agency's Bulletin. Endeavours shall be made to draw currents of «tourists» to Mexico, particularly as pleasure trips always bring splendid returns. The Agency shall endeavour to bring bodies engaged in the same pursuits and devoted to the same class of business, into contact with each other. A fifty per cent (50%) of the profits of the Agency shall be devoted to spread information concerning Mexico in other countries. To this end various means can be resorted to, such as cinema films, commercial agencies, periodicals, &c., &c. Steps shall be taken to reform the routine methods heretofore followed by our farmers. Samples of exportable articles and all the printed matter published on the subject shall be sent to our consuls abroad.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN AGRICULTURAL AND COMMERCIAL AGENCY IN THE STATE OF OAXACA, by *Mr. Juan Trujillo*.

The objects of this institution shall be:—(a) the wholesale and retail of all the articles required by the farmer; exportation of agricultural products and the importation of whatever may be required in the district and in the country in general; (b) the promotion of agriculture in the State and the improvement of methods of cultivation; (c) the betterment of conditions of the life and work of the proletarian devoted to farm work. The capital stock of the Agency shall be \$500,000.00, in shares of \$100.00 each, whereof only 10% shall be paid immediately.

Exportation.—The farmers shall inform the Agency of the probable quantity of the crops, on account of which they may be allowed 33% of their value as an advance. With these data the best markets may be looked for while the crop arrives. The Company shall no

be allowed more than 2% profit and shall do business with the farmers only as a commission agent.

Wholesale and retail.—The Agency shall sell both wholesale and retail in the State of Oaxaca cotton fabrics, percales, women's shawls (rebozos) sandals (guaraches), knives, axes, all kinds of agricultural implements, common crockery, ropes (reatas), &c. and every thing necessary for the every-day life of the small farmers and of the farm-hands. These effects shall be purchased precisely in the centres of production, their cost thereby being cheaper. With this object and when the conditions of business shall permit, branches shall gradually be established in all the towns of the State. Agricultural machinery shall be imported if possible.

Importation.—The Agency shall establish an active trade with the rest of the country, as well as commercial relations with foreign firms.—*Promotion of agriculture in Oaxaca.* One of the principal objects of the Agency shall be the promotion of agriculture in the State. For this purpose, it shall purchase the best machinery for field-work renting it out to the land owners; the latter will practically realize the advantages of such machinery and agricultural methods will little by little become improved. The Agency shall sell machinery to the farmers on account of their crops or in long time payments. The Agency shall engage the service of three agronomers and hydraulic engineers, whose business shall be, going from one hacienda, to another, to study (free of cost to the owner of the hacienda, beyond the board and lodging of the said engineers) the fertilization of the soil, the institution of small industries and new cultivation, the acclimatization of new products, water supplies, &c. The Agency shall undertake irrigation works, the cost of which shall be reimbursed in long time payments. The programme of the Agency shall be: «Promotion of capital, the betterment of the proletariat; progress the State, progress for the country». *Agricultural colonization.* Theoretical and practical studies shall be made of the conditions of the fertility of the uncultivated soil, wherein an agricultural colonization work shall be carried on, in such a way that the settlers may comfortably by themselves minister to their own domestic necessities and a margin for profit be left to them, thus being in a condition to save money, to form a capital little by little and to meet the obligations contracted with the land owner. A prudent immigration of foreigners shall be encouraged.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A BUREAU OF INFORMATION
AND A PERMANENT EXHIBITION DEPENDENT UPON
THE MEXICAN EMBASSY AT WASHINGTON, by *Mr. Carlos Paz y Puente*.

In order to promote and facilitate international commerce, it would be of advantage to establish in New York a Bureau of Information under the jurisdiction of the Mexican Embassy. This office should carry on an active commercial propaganda of Mexican articles. Relations with North-American Chambers of Commerce should be established and periodicals published for the purpose of making our products better known in the neighbouring Republic. Samples of our goods should be procured through the Mexican Chambers and a permanent exhibition thereof organized. This office could be supported by means of a small charge to persons soliciting information or to visitors and to those requesting especial work from the engineer in charge of the section of industry. A magazine of information should be published and the service of commercial drafts established. Detailed information should be rendered each month to our Embassy of the work done or undertaken by the said Bureau of Information.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF COOPERATIVE COMMERCIAL
AGRICULTURAL COMPANIES, by *Mr. A. Juárez*.

It would be of great advantage to form a sort of cooperative commercial agricultural societies, to whom the Government should permit the issuing paper money guaranteed at first by articles of exportation and later on by dollars. The said cooperative societies shall be similar to the Henequen Regulating Commission, although its ends should be less egoistic. A certain amount in paper money shall be given to the producer; the articles shall be sold in the best foreign markets; the guarantee of the paper money given to the farmer shall be deposited in a foreign Bank; the remainder shall be distributed between the farmer, giving him a certain amount in excess of his prices, and the employees, leaving a certain quantity to be devoted to improve our production and to promote our industries.

RECOGNITION OF THE LEGAL CAPACITY OF THE «MUTUAL SOCIETY OF COMMERCIAL TRAVELLERS», by *Mr. Esteban S. Castorena.*

With the object of submitting initiatives benefiting the body of Commercial Travellers, and National Commerce and Industry, it is advisable that the «Mutual Society of Commercial Travellers» be granted legal capacity; and to admit to the coming National Congresses of Merchants delegates from the said society, with a right of discussion and of voting in the meetings.

THE REDUCTION OF FEAST DAYS KEPT AT PRESENT THROUGHOUT THE REPUBLIC, by *Mr. Ignacio Cardoso and S. de T.*

The present needs of Commerce demand from merchants much laborious work and hence the necessity of reducing feast days to a minimum. On days of public mourning commerce should keep their doors open to the public, and buildings should be decked only according to established custom.

FREE INTRODUCTION OF PETROLEUM DEVOTED TO INDUSTRIES ALONG THE PACIFIC COAST, by *Messrs. José Arce, Eduardo Mestre, Arnulfo Peralta, Leopoldo Palacios, Juan F. Robertson, and Francisco Alvarez.*

The State of Sonora and the Peninsula of Lower California, by virtue of their natural conditions, need fuel for their industries and for their agricultural work. The barrenness of that section of our country increases the necessity of fuel. It is imported from Australia, Japan, and the United States, because unfortunately our ways of communication and means of transportation do not permit

of Mexican combustible material being utilized. By reason of the world struggle, foreign fuel has risen extraordinarily whence the free importation of petroleum devoted to our Pacific coast becomes imperative. Thus then the already existing privilege concerning mineral coal should be made extensive to petroleum for the exclusive use of industries in Sonora and Lower California.

Another local problem is the scarcity of gasoline in the Tabasco ports. The river traffic has very much diminished on this account. The Department of Industry and Commerce should urge producers of gasoline to have their warehouses at the Tabasco ports well supplied.

INITIATIVE TO REMEDY THE SHORTAGE OF GASOLINE IN
THE STATE OF TABASCO, by *Messrs Adolfo Ferrer and F.
Castellanos D.*

Tabasco is at present well supplied with articles of prime necessity; but the excessive rise in prices is due in that section to the fact that the transportation of goods is chiefly done by water, and gasoline which is the fuel almost exclusively consumed is scarce. The Department of Industry and Commerce should procure that the Mexican Petroleum Company «El Aguila» be amply stocked with gasoline in Tabasco, and that they sell that fuel at lower rates, because the immoderate advance in price of gasoline at present is in no way warranted.

FREE EXPORTATION OF COFFEE AND REDUCTION OF
FREIGHT ON SAME, by *Messrs. Tomás Pacheco, Alfredo Juárez
and Alfredo A. Altamirano.*

The price of coffee has fallen considerably in foreign markets where almost all of the Mexican coffee crops are sold. Prices to-day are not sufficient to cover the outlay of cultivation. Planters suffer great loss and the production of coffee threatens to fall in a very great proportion. This seems to be but a momentary crisis, the principal cause whereof is the European struggle which has closed the principal markets of consumption in the world to our planters.

Last year's crops were able to be raised due to the labourers having still been paid in paper money, whereby the market price of the coffee and the expenses of cultivation were almost balanced; but this year the labourers must be paid in silver, wherefore the difference between the price and the cost of raising the coffee will increase three or four pesos a «quintal» (1 cwt. = Kgs. 45.359), to the detriment of the planter.

Coffee therefore should be exempted from all kinds of export duties, at least until better prices are obtainable in foreign markets. Moreover exporters should not be charged the 25% additional freight demanded by the railroads for furnishing preferent cars. In the long run this crisis is bound to cease and the production of coffee will amply compensate the Treasury for any loss.

EXEMPTION FROM EXACTIONS ON COFFEE, by *Mr. Alfredo A. Altamirano.*

Besides the Federal taxes and the additional railroad tariffs, the coffee planter on a small scale is burdened with municipal and state taxes, whereby his loss during last year was from two to four pesos national gold per «quintal». (1 cwt., or kgs. 45.359.) It is not necessary to insist on how patriotic and beneficial a thing it would be to help the planter on a small scale, especially in circumstances so critical as he is now labouring under.

It would be advisable to obtain from the Executive of the Union the exemption from duty on exportation of coffee, as well as intervention with the municipal and state authorities in the coffee section of the country, for the purpose that at least during the present fiscal year coffee planters be freed from all state and municipal taxes and any arrears they may be under on this score be condoned.

MEASURES FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF COMMERCIAL CONDITIONS IN AUTLAN, by *Mr. Elias F. Hurtado.*

The Autlán region in the State of Jalisco is very rich and produces very good corn crops. At this time however it is labouring

under very critical circumstances, because the taxes have been fixed proportionately to the lands comprised in the «haciendas», and not as would be just, taking the land actually cultivated as a basis. It is therefore imperative that new taxes be fixed on bases more equitable to the contributor.

The Autlán section could supply the rest of the country more than one hundred and fifty thousand hectoliters of corn a year. Unfortunately the ways of communication with Autlán are insufficient and building a railroad from Guadalajara to the port of Chamela, would take several years unless the Federal Government were to come to the assistance of the State. For the present it would be highly beneficial that the Department of Communications and Public Works should repair the highroads from Autlán to the stations at Ameca, Sayula and Colima; or at least that they should be improved so that the traffic on beasts of burden might be carried on without a very great amount of trouble.

THE REESTABLISHMENT OF THE FREE ZONE ON THE BORDER WITH UNITED STATES, by *Messrs. José Arce, Eduardo Mestre, Arnulfo Peralta, Leopoldo Palacios, Francisco Alvarez and Juan P. Robertson.*

Mexican trade at the Northern Border has considerably diminished since the suppression of the free zone. A great number of Mexican commercial houses pass over to bordering American towns and the wealth in that section of the country has decreased alarmingly.

It might be advanced against the reestablishment of the free zone that, owing to the European war, American goods would meet with no competition from England, France, Germany, &c. Competition however would be at once established with the American goods themselves, which would fetch lower prices on this side than those that might be obtained beyond the Río Bravo, as wages are lower in this country, the cost of living less, &c.

The Congress of the Union should therefore be requested to reestablish the free zone on the border with the United States of America.

INITIATIVE FOR THE EXEMPTION FROM IMPORT DUTIES ON FABRICS OF INFERIOR QUALITY COMING FROM THE UNITED STATES, by *Messrs. Elías H. Hurtado, A. Juárez, Salvador R. Betancourt, Ramón Torres, E. Mestre, J. Macías and G. Caballero.*

The exemption from import duty on fabrics of inferior quality from the United States favours the consumer, but very seriously damages the Mexican industrial. Wages have greatly increased, the taxes wherewith our cotton and woolen mills are burdened have been multiplied; and as if all this were not enough, fabrics of inferior quality are declared free of all kinds of import duty. By such methods the national woolen and cotton mill industry will be completely crushed; almost all the factories will close their doors (all the small factories to start with); thousands of workmen will be left without employment and the Government will find in them so many more enemies of order and of public peace. It would therefore be wise to place all the foregoing considerations before the Secretary of the Treasury.

INITIATIVE FOR GOVERNMENTAL PROTECTION ON THE WOOLEN AND COTTON MILL INDUSTRY, by *Mr. Jose Schmelz.*

It has been given out that all cotton and wool fabrics of inferior quality imported from the United States are to be declared free of all import duty. Such a measure is seriously injurious, not only to national industry but to the Government itself, whose revenues will thereby be considerably decreased. Until lately the national woolen and cotton mill industry was so flourishing that it was in vain that foreign production should attempt to compete with it, especially with regard to fabrics of inferior quality.

This measure favours the consumer, but little, because it is a well known fact that the price of fabrics has increased considerably owing to the European war.

Our factories import chemical substances, wool, and almost all of the necessary raw material. Thus then, it would be more

advisable to favour the production of such materials among ourselves, to facilitate the transportation of these articles, to reduce the duties on chemical substances, and to remove the difficulties which arise daily between employers and employees. In this way national fabrics could be made cheaper and the producer and the consumer would both be benefited.

POSTPONEMENT OF THE DECREE ON FREE IMPORTATION OF FABRICS OF INFERIOR QUALITY, UNTIL THE INDUSTRIALS OF THE COUNTRY ARE GIVEN A HEARING, by *Mr. Eduardo Mestre*.

The decree said to be about to be issued relative to the free importation of fabrics and prints will do away with the national woolen and cotton mill industry, in which have been invested more than two hundred million pesos.

It behooves the industrials above all to defend themselves against a measure so injurious to them. But on the other hand merchants are also affected by whatever relates to Industry and Agriculture; and for this reason, and moreover in order to give industrials an open proof of solidarity and union, the President of the Republic ought respectfully to be approached on the subject, with the request that the said decree be postponed until a hearing has been given those directly injured by such a measure, namely the owners of cotton and woolen mills.

A PROTEST AGAINST SOLICITING THE ANNULMENT OF THE DECREE ON FREE IMPORTATION OF WOOLEN AND COTTON FABRICS OF INFERIOR QUALITY, by *Mr. S. R. Chavez*.

The work undertaken by this National Congress of Merchants has for its end above all the moralizing of Commerce and the cheapening of good-stuffs, but never that of protecting individual or joint interests. By the exemption from duty on cotton and woolen fabrics of inferior quality a limited number of industrials are injured, but on the other hand the whole nation is benefited. It is

not true that by the decree on free importation of fabrics and cotton prints all the mills in the country are going to close their doors; the mill owners have a large margin for profit and the upshot of it all will be that they will have to be satisfied with a slightly less profit.

Nevertheless, if such a thing should happen, the mill hands could devote themselves to agriculture, that is in such great need of labourers for its advancement.

Therefore, a proposition so deeply opposed to general work of this Congress should not be taken into consideration, seeing that only the interests of a group of industrials are at stake and not public welfare and general utility.

FREE EXPORTATION OF NATIONAL COTTON, by *Messrs. J. B. Sahagún and J. Castrillón.*

It is true that the national production of cotton is not enough to meet the requirements of our cotton mills. But it is also unquestionable that cotton planter run the risk of not finding in our country a market for their production; firstly, because if the free importation of fabrics and cotton and woolen prints is decreed, national industry will diminish in a very great proportion; and secondly, because disputes are constantly arising between masters and workmen which put obstacles in the way of, delay, and, in the long run, diminish industrial activity.

Ever since the Banks discontinued their operations the farmer finds himself in the necessity of disposing of his crops quickly, so as to procure wherewith to cover the expenses of cultivation. The Mexican cotton planter should be assisted by placing him in a position to obtain the best price for his products. Be it also borne in mind that the commercial activity of the city of Torreon and the wealthy «Laguna» district will be given great impulse if the prohibition which now exists of exporting that fiber is revoked and if the exemption from duty on leaving the country is approved.

DRAFT OF LAW OF CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS, BASED
ON FRACTION X OF CLAUSE 73 OF THE CONSTITUTION
NOW IN FORCE, by *Messrs. Fernando Díez Barroso,*
José F. León and Julio Torroella.

The profession of chartered accountant—which is different from that of commercial accountant—become every day more necessary. It is the duty of the chartered accountant to certify to the balance sheets of joint stock companies (as the institution of representatives of the shareholders does not altogether fulfil its ends); to render accounts in bankruptcies and judicial liquidations (which oftentimes become unnecessarily complicated through the incompetence of those charged with the rendering thereof); and to be familiar with everything relating to expert accounting, explanatory annotation in accounts, accounts, &c. It is therefore absolutely necessary to institute legal precepts in the sense indicated, to govern the operation of chartered accountants.

AMENDMENT OF THE CLAUSES OF THE COMMERCIAL
CODE RELATIVE TO THE PROFESSION OF BROKER,
by *Alberto Islas.*

The broker, besides being the intermediary in mercantile transactions, is moreover a functionary to whose acts entire credit must be given. Contrat certificates executed before a broker, under clause 1237 of the Commercial Code, constitute public documents, the importance of which is very great as regards the procedure and the valuation of the evidence.

Bills of exchange which constitute an act of commerce wherein the broker should intervene, would also be protested to great advantage, before him. Moreover, this functionary should authorize contracts of commercial societies; to this effect it would be advisable to amend our commercial laws.

INTERVENTION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY AND
COMMERCE IN THE FORMATION OF THE CUSTOM
HOUSE LAWS ON IMPORTATION AND EXPORTATION,
by *Messrs. José Arce, Eduardo Mestre, Arnulfo Peralta, Leopoldo
Palacios, Juan Robertson and Francisco Alvarez.*

This Department of State is in closer touch than other with the Industry and Commerce of the Republic. Its intervention in the formation of custom house laws will smoothe the friction not unfrequently occurring and will render the distribution of imposts more equitable. As there is the intention that the Federate Chambers of Commerce should intervene in the formation of these laws, the cooperation of the Department of Industry and Commerce in this work, becomes imperative.

PROJECT OF AMENDMENT OF THE COMMERCIAL CODE IN
THE PART RELATIVE TO BANKRUPTCY, by *Lic. Antonio
Ramos Pedrueza.*

Our present legislation in matters of bankruptcy does not altogether fulfill the essential objects of a good law upon the subject, viz:

(a) to cut to the root a situation which is pernicious to several parties;

(b) to preserve the assets of the bankrupt for the benefit of the creditors;

(c) to equitably distribute the said assets; and

(d) to demand from the bankrupt the responsibilities incurred.

It would be a very great improvement to amend our law in the following points:

I.—By adopting a simpler and less casuistical criterion in classifying bankruptcy.

II.—By abolishing the intervention of the clerk of the court in reference to inventories and substituting the former with a licensed broker.

III.—By substituting the interventor with a committee of three creditors and a supply member of the said committee.

IV.—The said committee should be appointed as soon as it has been discovered who the principal creditors are, and their functions shall be the same as those heretofore entrusted to the interventor; moreover, a further function of the committee shall be facilitate and hasten the proceedings.

V.—The creditors' meetings shall be called by this committee and presided by the receiver; the minutes shall be drawn up by one of the members of the committee and the receiver shall present the said minutes to the judge of the court. Any controversy that may arise shall be decided by the judge of the court after granting a hearing to the receiver and to the Public Attorney.

VI.—The terms shall be shortened and judicial notices abroad shall be served by cable with the intervention of the Mexican consuls.

VII.—The notifications for the meetings shall be served by a notary named by the receiver, and the meeting shall be held whatever be the number of creditors present, provided all have been served due notice to attend.

VIII.—The placing of the case under the jurisdiction of the criminal authorities, when criminal responsibilities be incurred, may be made not only by the receiver, but also by any member of the committee.

XI.—The judge of the criminal court shall not give definite judgment until the judge of the bankruptcy court shall have decided upon the legitimacy of the credits.

X.—The appeals in bankruptcy proceedings, both regarding final decrees and provisionary orders, shall be followed and definitely decided preferently to other business, by reason of the numerous parties interested in bankruptcy proceedings.

XI.—The Penal Code should be amended in the part relative to fraudulent bankruptcy, in harmony with the new classification of bankruptcy that may be adopted; in this amendment it shall be defined whether any special penalty shall be applicable to the guilty party, or whether he shall be punished as provided under the general precepts on misdemeanours (*delito de culpa*).

UNIFORMITY OF PROCEDURE IN «PROTEST», by *Messrs. Diego Santacruz, Rafael Fuentes and Tomás Pacheco.*

The procedure now followed in the protest of bills is extremely

burdensome and long. Moreover, under article 516 of our Commercial Code it is provided that «protest» may be verified only through the relative notarial certification; this delays the proceeding too long.

In countries where more practical methods in commercial matters are followed, the procedure is more rapid and cheaper, and the certified copy of the notarial minutes is omitted.

It would very greatly facilitate commercial transactions if article 516 of our Commercial Code and correlatives were modified, in the sense that «protests» be made by means of separate ordinary certifications and not in the notarial files.

UNIFORMITY IN THE SYSTEM OF BARGAIN AND SALE CONTRACTS IN THE REPUBLIC, by *Messrs. Roberto Garza Cabello and Fernando C. Gámez.*

It is necessary to make our system of bargain and sale contracts uniform and once for all to define certain terms the meaning of which is construed differently in different parts of the country, whence numberless difficulties arise without there being any actual reason therefor.

These various interpretations are the origin of many misunderstandings and cause incredible trouble in the course of transactions. It would therefore be most advisable that it be established that terms should be construed uniformly throughout the whole country. This uniformity in the system is imperative.

DRAFT OF LAW OF PAYMENTS CONCILIATING DIVERS INTERESTS, by *Mr. Alberto Islas.*

The financial problem is of singular importance to the progress of our country. At present all commercial transactions are carried out in hard cash, the number and importance of which are thereby very much reduced. It is necessary that fiat money be put in circulation, duly guaranteed, and made worthy of the confiden-

ce of the public. The Bank of Issue should fill this national want, because the lack of an adequate means of exchange has brought with it, among a great many other evils, numberless law suits for settlements of accounts, the valuation of which it is extremely difficult to determine.

Almost all of the rural and city property of the Republic is burdened with mortgages or incumbrances; and if the law to determine the equivalents between the former money and that which the Bank of Issue may put in circulation, are not equitable, and to a certain degree favourable to the debtors, real property will pass over to new hands, perhaps to foreign hands, who will elude the constitutional precept forbidding them to acquire real property in our country. Moreover the value of real property will decrease very considerably.

It would therefore be most advisable that the law which is to establish the equivalents in matter of payments, should be drafted by persons most competent in political economy, and that it should conciliate as much as possible the interests of creditors and debtors, granting long terms for settlements in order that merchants be not driven to bankruptcy and liquidation.

INTERVENTION OF THE CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE IN THE FORMATION OF THE STATE AND THE MUNICIPAL BUDGETS, by *Mr. Ramón Torrés*.

The Chambers of Commerce are the legitimate representatives of the commercial community, wherefore and in order that taxes be more equitably distributed, they should intervene in the formation of the budgets, both of the States of the Federation and of the municipalities.

The necessity of merchants being represented in the formation of the said fiscal laws has of late been made manifest. In the city of Leon the taxes were very badly distributed and, as they were not sufficient to cover the expenses, they will have to be increased, perhaps doubled. Merchants will find themselves in very great straits to be able to pay such taxes.

CREATION OF THE GENERAL PROPERTY TAX, by *Mr. Ramón Torres.*

The system of one general property tax is very economical to the Treasury as not necessitating a great number of employees to collect it; and easier for the merchant who is thereby saved the trouble of having to go to different offices to pay his payments.

The system adopted by the United States very nearly approaches the one general property tax. In Mexico the inspectors of the Stamp tax, those of the State and Municipal taxes, are positive spies of the acts of the merchant. The latter, through a peculiar idiosyncrasy of ours, does not conduct his business as he ought to at the sight of everybody.

ANNULMENT OF THE FEDERAL TAX ON ADVERTISEMENTS, by *Mr. Ramón Torres.*

In Mexico people advertise little. Advertisements have attained great development in other countries to the benefit of commerce in those countries. This tax on advertisements is unadvisable because a great many merchants (who have to pay taxes on telephones, electric lamps, &c.) will refrain from advertising their goods, thereby hindering the prosperity of our commerce.

It would be highly beneficial to petition the annulment of this tax, especially as the returns to the Treasury in this connection must really be very small.

ADVERTISEMENTS APPEARING IN PERIODICALS OF THE CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE TO BE FREE FROM TAXATION, by *Messrs. Jesús M. Espinosa, Amador E. Ugalde and Pedro Fernández.*

Fraction B of the Law of the 5th. of June 1917 provides for a tax of 10% on the price of advertisements appearing in periodical publications. Now, the official organs of the Chambers of Commerce

are principally supported by advertisements published by members of the said Chambers themselves. Moreover, such publications should be considered as beneficial and of public interest, the object pursued by the Chamber press being highly laudable.

Wherefore the exemption from the said tax in so far as concerns periodicals that are official organs of the Chambers of Commerce, should be submitted to the consideration of the Federal Congress.

ESTABLISHMENT OF A MEXICAN COMMERCIAL BANK,
by *Messrs. Agustín Legorreta and Francisco M. González.*

The merchants of the Metropolis are in urgent need of credit. Following are certain bases on which might be established a Mexican Commercial Bank, the object of which would be to relieve certain pressing needs of our merchants. The initial capital, two million pesos, to be subscribed in shares to bearer. The value of each share to be twenty pesos. The first thing to be done would be to call together a group of men of good will and standing and then the public would furnish the greater part of the assests. The capital stock should be suitably distributed in order to avoid the pernicious influence exercised by holders of large numbers of shares. One single individual would not be allowed to acquire more than 250 shares. As to the designation and reelection of the members of the Board of Directors, a severe criterion would be followed specified in the By-laws.

The principal operations of the Bank would be:—Discount of commercial paper at short time (whereby the principal object of a commercial Bank would be fulfilled); rediscount of its loans and discounts; no advances on current accounts would be allowed, firstly because of the uncertainty which they cast upon the government of the cash, it not being possible to estimate with certainty the sums available, and secondly because current accounts are not proceeded with in our courts as attachable documents; no limitation would be established on the amount of the operations, because as the Bank would not grant open credits (a practice which some years ago caused our Banking Institutions to benefit only a reduced number of persons), all operations to be made under actual guarantee wherefore any kind of limitation would prove harmful.

Discounts always to be made on documents covering goods, merchandise, wherefore there is no reason whatsoever for limiting the amount of the operations.

MEANS OF REMITTING FUNDS, by *Mr. Ramón Torres.*

The means of remitting funds from one place to another are at present very deficient. They are limited to postal orders which, though useful in private cases, are exceedingly troublesome for merchants, not only because of the frequency wherewith they have to make remittances but also of the large amounts remitted. This lack of means of remitting money renders transactions very difficult. Besides, owing to the insecurity of the roads in certain sections of the country, the merchant who personally transports his cash runs the risk of losing it altogether.

Under such circumstances it would be a great advantage that the Government should establish offices of the Monetary Commission in the principal cities of the country, to be utilized at least as means of exchange.

THE ATTACHED BANKS (INCAUTADOS) AND THEIR FUTURE RELATIONS WITH THE SOLE BANK OF ISSUE, by *Messrs. José Arce, Arnulfo Peralta, Leopoldo Palacios, Juan Robertson and Francisco Alvarez.*

Not only commerce but also the other sources of wealth of the country are at present feeling the bad effects of the great scarcity of means of exchange. The latter is due principally to the paralization of our Banking activities. Funds now can only be remitted at a rate of 10% and the rates on mutual exchange of cash are exorbitant, the consuming classes being thereby very seriously injured. An abundant circulation of values both metallic and fiat money easily to be acquired and mobilized, is urgently needed. Owing to all these considerations, it would be desirable that, without in the least opposing the rights upon which the sole Bank

of Issue is to be founded, the already existing Banks should be preserved so that when acquiring their full legal capacity they may be transformed into financing or other kinds of institutions. For this purpose they shall waive the issue of notes; they shall bind themselves to redeem their circulation; in accord with the Treasury Department a reasonable term shall be established for them to rehabilitate themselves or else be liquidated. With regard to sight deposits, a prudent term shall also be fixed to be reckoned from the date whereon the bills of the Sole Bank of Issue begin to circulate. It would, moreover, be advisable that such Banks as can prove not being seriously impaired should be allowed to merge into other Banks.

ISSUE OF ONE THOUSAND MILLION PESOS IN BILLS TO
BE DENOMINATED «INTERIOR CREDIT OF MEXICO»,
by Messrs. *Jesús Ortiz, Juan Lafarga Aragón, Esteban S. Castorena and Federico Compeán.*

The First National Congress of Merchants has petitioned the reduction and in some cases the annulment of a good number of imposts. The Government needs large resources for its support and cannot afford to grant such petitions. Neither should the Government contract loans which would bring but slight relief and on the other hand prove most onerous.

A salutary measure indeed would be for our Chamber of Deputies to resolve the issue of one thousand million pesos in bills of obligatory circulation and of unlimited power as legal tender. The total sum shall be guaranteed by the aggregate values possessed within our territory both by nationals and foreigners. An annual tax of 1% on capitals in excess of three hundred pesos (25% in national gold and the rest in bills) shall be gradually levied to be devoted to the redemption of this internal loan. The one thousand millions shall be placed in the hands of the Sole Bank of Issue, which shall be governed by five persons appointed by the Federation of the Chambers of Commerce. The Bank shall open the Government sufficient credit to enable it to subsist and reduce its imposts in at least 40%. The same thing shall be done with the States that should so petition it and to whom loans shall be made up to 40% of their revenues. Three hundred millions shall be reser-

ved for payment of the claims for damages caused by the revolution. The Government and the States shall periodically exchange for bills the cash they have acquired, so as to enable the Bank to establish its credits on a solid basis.

EXPANSION OF THE WAYS OF COMMUNICATION AS AN EFFICACIOUS MEANS OF PROMOTING HOME AND FOREIGN TRADE, by *Messrs. Juan P. Robertson and José Arce.*

For the ulterior development of our trade it is very important that a railroad be built the first division extending from Puerto Isabel (Sonora) to monument 204 of the boundary line with the United States; the second section to start from Mexicali arriving at the free and open port (*puerto de altura*) nearest the United States, «La Ensenada», on the west coast of Lower California; the third division shall join this port with the town of Tijuana, on the dividing line between the two Californias; and, lastly, the fourth division shall run from Puerto Isabel to the town El Altar, going on to the town of Frontera, whence it shall continue to Cuchuvirachic and from there to Carretas; it shall then pass through Paso de Janos and the San Pedro mines, terminating at Rancheria (Chihuahua). This railroad will make possible the exploitation and exportation of chloride of sodium, of which there exist very rich deposits in that section; it will moreover facilitate the establishment of a large iron and steel foundry at Magdalen Bay, where the minerals of that section can be smelted, and mineral coal and coke imported in exchange for our sea salt. With this railway we should be able to export on a large scale tinctorial lichen called «orchilla», mother-of-pearl, smeltable minerals and precious metals whereof large deposits exist in those localities. It is precisely the countries that should supply us with fuel who are in most need of our chloride of sodium.

This railroad would possess a strategic importance. It would make Magdalen Bay a harbour of refreshment and distribution of merchandise on transit, for interoceanic and intercontinental commerce in connection with Salina Cruz and Puerto Mexico. Of the 750 million dollars to which the pacific trade of the Spanish-American Republics amounted in 1913, 250 million correspond to Me-

xico. This data indicate the importance of the exterior commerce of our country with nations bathed by the Pacific Ocean and the significant part which it is called upon to play. Intercontinental commerce through Tehuantepec saves considerable distance and freight and may advantageously compete with trade through the Panama Canal.

With regard to our railroad network it is of the utmost importance that the center of the Republic should communicate with the free and open ports of the Pacific. This would very greatly promote the growth of both our home and our foreign trade.

MEASURES TO BE INSTITUTED TO PROMOTE OUR COMMERCE BOTH AT HOME AND ABROAD, by *Mr. Arturo E. Padilla.*

Nothing injures our home and our foreign trade so much as irregular service in customs houses and railroads. No matter what measures be adopted to promote our commerce, they all will be of secondary importance if we consider that all of us need the customs houses to conduct ably and honestly the despatch of goods imported and exported, and to have an end put to contraband, concessions, exemptions, and privileges. The same thing may be said of the railroads: it is urgent that the lines be repaired, that the service be improved by sufficient rolling stock, and that the railroadmen be disciplined and moralized.

Moreover, the Government should concentrate all its activities in the persecution of the gangs of bandits and revolutionaries who render commercial traffic so insecure.

MEANS FOR REMEDYING THE DEFICIENCIES IN THE RAILROAD SERVICE, by *Lic. Eduardo Mestre G.*

The railroad service at present does not answer the needs of the public. The Law on railroads, article 153, whereof provides for the office of representative inspectors (*comisarios inspectores*) and lays down the duties of the latter, should again be enforced with

all due severity. The Department of Industry and Commerce always possesses the best statistical data and is in a position to know at any time whether a given section of the country is becoming impoverished or prosperous in consequence of the railroad tariffs. Thus then it behooves the said Department closely to watch the conduct of railroad concerns and great advantages would be derived from the said Department assuming the functions prescribed under above mentioned article 153 of the railroad Law. If the employees know that the Government is watching their every act, irregularities will cease or at least diminish very considerably. Moreover, all the duties laid on the representative inspectors (*comisarios inspectores*) would be discharged to great advantage by the afore mentioned Department because, owing to special reasons, it would be in a much better position than anybody else to investigate the damages thereby occasioned. In England, France, and the United States the railroads depend on offices similar to our Department of Industry and Commerce. For this reason it would be advisable to establish in the said Department a railroad section under an Executive Board, a committee for the revision of tariffs, contracts, agreements, &c.; a section for inspectors, another for statistics, and another, advisory, for claims and complaints.

The Executive Board of the railroad section would be formed by seven persons, three of whom would represent the Department of Industry and Commerce; two the railroads; and two, to be appointed by this assembly of Chambers, Industry and Commerce.

The means of remedying the deficiencies in the Railroad Service may be as follows:

I. Means of making up for the want of equipment.

1.—Shippers shall be urged to load the cars up to their full capacity without leaving empty or unused spaces.

2.—Consigners and consignees shall be urged to occupy the least possible time in loading and unloading cars loaded to their full capacity.

3.—It would be desirable that inspectors be appointed to see to it that local freight cars (excepting cars loaded to their full capacity) be loaded to their full cubic capacity.

4.—Cars repaired at the expense of private individuals shall be handled by the railroads.

II. Regulations for the receiving of freight expenses.

1.—When cars be loaded in excess of the minimum weight, a 10% discount on the excess of the minimum weight shall be allowed.

- 2.—Express tariffs on cars loaded shall be modified so as to make the former more equitable.
- 3.—To abolish the 25% on freight which certain companies charge for furnishing cars preferently.
- 4.—Freight charges shall be applicable to documentary express shipments, when the latter do not reach the consignee within five days from the date on which they should arrive.
- 5.—The Government shall forbid that shippers be compelled to send their merchandise by express.
- 6.—The railroad rules and regulations that establish preference of cars in the case of cattle, fruit, articles of prime necessity and things in general which easily turn putrid, shall be strictly enforced.
- 7.—The circular relative to special freight trains shall be modified favourably to the public.
- 8.—The operating of private companies within the railroads for the exploitation of special cars shall be forbidden or else the said companies shall be submitted to fixed tariffs and regulations.
- 9.—The National lines shall reestablish their direct service with United States so as to enable the public to enjoy the benefit of direct tariffs.
- 10.—The order that the railroad companies shall seize cars belonging to private concerns shall be revoked.
- 11.—The Department of Industry and Commerce shall call a meeting of railroad representatives to be attended also by representatives from the Congress of Merchants, whereat shall be discussed the most adequate means of benefitting every body concerned.
- 12.—A 25% discount on transportation of corn shall be established temporarily.
- 13.—Exemption from customs duties and a discount of 50% on railroad tariffs in the transportation of agricultural machinery shall be established.

FIRST NATIONAL CONGRESS OF MERCHANTS



A group of delegates to the Congress.

EFFICACY IN RAILROAD TRANSPORTATION ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL FACTORS IN MATERIALLY IMPROVING THE COMMERCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE REPUBLIC,
by *Mr. Bruno Newman.*

There are two marked defects in the railroad service at present. The want of efficacy on the part of the employees to improve the service and the want of impartiality in the distribution of cars. In order to remedy the former it would be well to establish customs agencies at the expense of the railroad, similar to those which existed in the National Lines; to organize a uniform and periodical local service; to watch the daily run of the cars; not to allow loaded cars to enter and depart from the Terminal Depots except by strict order of turn; and lastly frequently to revise the station masters' registers of car orders, in order thus to prevent the registering of false or suppositions turns.

As regards the want of impartiality in the disposition of cars it is advisable to make a better distribution of them, not allowing them to accumulate in divisions where they are not needed; and as far as possible to do away with preference turns.

MORALIZATION OF FREIGHT EMPLOYEES, by *Mr. Ramón Torres.*

A great many thefts are now being committed in the railroad transportation of merchandise from one city to another in the Republic, and in order to be able to obtain empty cars it is necessary to deal out undue gratuities. The merchant charges this loss and increase of expense to the price of his goods, and in the long run it is the consumer who has to suffer all the harm. Such proceedings are highly immoral because the employees are paid by the company, and the merchant who religiously pays the latter should not be made to pay a second time. It is absolutely necessary therefore to moralize the personal of the railroads and to recommend merchants to refrain from offering gratuities in order to be served preferentially in the transportation of their merchandise.

THE NECESSITY OF ESTABLISHING A TARIFFS COMMISSION DEPENDENT ON THE DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE, by *Eng. Lorenzo Pérez Castro*.

The means of transportation are intimately connected with, or rather subordinate to, commerce. In our present state of civilization, the producer and the consumer hardly ever come into direct contact with each other; so that it is the merchant who always has to transport his merchandise from the centres of production to the markets whereat they are consumed. In England—a country exceptionally well governed having enjoyed the benefits of internal peace from as far back as the XVII century—the official activities with regard to transportation are exercised through the «Board of Trade», who regulate commerce. Indeed, one of the six departments into which the «Board of Trade» is divided is that of commerce, to which another especial one, viz. of bankruptcy, has been added. (Bankruptcy Act, 1883.) In the United States—a country also eminently commercial—by virtue of the «Interstate Commerce Act» (February the 4th. 1887), the Federal Government intervenes in the methods of transportation—especially in matters relating to tariffs—through the «Interstate Commerce Commission». It is precisely in order to fix just tariffs that the Government of the Nation employs numerous legions of «Valuation Engineers», who determine with the greatest possible accuracy the cost of the railroads, the wear and tear of all material, the cost of repairing, &c. In Mexico, the railroads have not cooperated to the advancement of our commerce; they have established their tariffs under the protection of benevolent administrations to the benefit of commercial North-American firms. The Tariffs Commission in the Department of Communications and Public Works does not fulfill its object; it ought to work systematically and independently, and should constantly be given complete statistic information, which only the Department of Industry and Commerce is in a position to furnish. It is only by being in intimate contact with the varying needs of our commerce that matters relating to tariffs can be governed to the real benefit of our national interests. The Commission moreover, should not be characterized solely as an advisory body but should also be vested with certain executive powers. The said Commission (formed if so desired by five members, si-

ilarly to the «Interstate Commerce Commission», to represent Commerce, Industry, Agriculture, and other sources of public wealth) should also count upon a competent body of inspectors and supervisors. The railroad service would greatly improve and what in normal times is only one of so many necessities, under prevailing conditions constitutes a most pressing one.

Politics in Mexico, as in all countries, have always done great harm to the railroad service. With us the Government is the principal shareholder, but the Boards of Directors operate independently. Unfortunately, foreigners are not excluded from the personnel of the railroadsh which needs a very thorough cleansing. Our railroad legislation is wise and clearly defines the intervention of the State. To begin with it is absolutely necessary to inspect the acts of the railroad Executive Board, who at present are not responsible for their acts and render no accounts to the Government, and as a matter of fact are altogether independent. Their present management may cause our public debt to increase very considerably. Nor is the said Executive Board of the National Lines even submitted to the limitations which are imposed upon private companies. It is therefore necessary that the Department of Communications should keep a strict watch on their work; that the Treasury Department should inspect all their acts similar to what is done in all other offices that handle public funds; and lastly that the Department of Industry and Commerce should prevent arbitrary alterations in the tariffs and remedy the very grave deficiencies to be found in freight matters.

Merchants are compelled to give gratifications, to pay tips and to perform other immoral acts of criminal complicity; otherwise they cannot get their goods transported to their destination. Merchants on a small scale, who are unable to pay such gratifications, ship their goods by express and thereby suffer a loss of at least 50%, of which they are arbitrarily robbed in those offices. In the long run it is the unfortunate consumer who has to pay for all these irregularities. Merchants make no complaint for fear of being persecuted; but if the Department of Industry and Commerce is granted executive and inspecting power in railroad matter, the complainants will be thereby protected and abuses will be remedied. The functionaries now in charge of our National lines are altogether lacking in competence and are absolutely void of honesty and patriotism.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A TECHNICAL FREIGHT OFFICE, by *Messrs. E. Serdan, F. J. de Hoyos, and A. Alva.*

In order to promote commerce and to facilitate the transportation of merchandise, it would be well to establish a «Technical freight office» to serve as intermediary between merchants and railroad enterprises; to furnish all kind of information to the public, statistic data &c., all of which would tend to simplify and to render more expeditious the purchase and sale of merchandise; to endeavour to obtain from the high railroad officials a uniform spirit of equity, specially in contracts for cars; to organize the «Association of railroad train and car owners»; and lastly to concern itself very especially about solving the problem of the shortage of rolling stock, a thing which is harming commercial transactions so much just now.

The authors of this project undertake to organize the technical freight office above referred to and believe that the reorganization of the Revisory Tariff Commission under the jurisdiction of the Department of Industry and Commerce is a matter most urgently needed.

The said Revisory Tariff Commission could at once discuss the uniformity «bills of loading»; the revision of the conditions stipulated in the said bills of loading; the elimination of the note to be found in all the receipts, which are now issued altogether nullifying the rights of the merchant with respect to the company; the reorganization of the express departments, reforming the practice followed in those offices and laying down more equitable regulations with reference to freight, tariffs, classification of goods, &c; the elimination of certain unjust stipulations to be found at the foot of the bills of expenses, &.

CERTAIN PRIVILEGES TO BE GRANTED COMMERCIAL TRAVELLERS CONDUCTIVE TO THE BENEFIT OF COMMERCE IN GENERAL, by *Messrs. Esteban S. Castorena and Julio Beltrán.*

Commercial travellers have been one of the most important factors in the growth of commerce. The Governments of the most advanced countries of the world, railroad companies, hotel proprie-

tors, &c. have granted them certain privileges recognizing their mission as highly beneficial. If we consider that their transactions are made with merchants and industrials who contribute to the public purse, and that they represent firms which also pay taxes, it is but logical that they should not be burdened with taxes by the Treasury when their commercial transactions are done by means of catalogues, samples or lists on behalf of national or foreign firms. Seeing they do propaganda work and contribute to establish and promote commercial credit, it would be a great advantage that the railroad and steamship companies allow them a discount of 50% on their tickets and free luggage up to a hundred kilos. In order to encourage these men, the Government, when granting concessions for new railroads and navigation enterprises, should stipulate for the foregoing privileges of free luggage and a discount on railway fares. For the purpose of identification, commercial travellers shall carry with them cards containing their photographs and personal description, which for greater security shall be authorized by some Chamber of Commerce or by the Mutual Society of Commercial Travellers.

REVISION OF THE CONTRACT WITH THE VERACRUZ TERMINAL COMPANY AND BUILDING OF SHEDS IN THAT PORT, by Messrs. *Diego Santa Cruz, Rafael Fuentes and Tomás Pacheco.*

The old sheds adjoining the Veracruz Customs House were destroyed some time ago and so far they have not been replaced; wherefore imported merchandise and that coming in from our own ports gets damaged because of its being left uncovered in the open air. Besides this, it is very difficult to protect merchandise under such conditions and thefts are very frequent. As the Government has signed a contract with the Veracruz Terminal Company and the latter is unable to handle all the cargo which arrives at the port, it is necessary that the said company be effectively inspected so that they may duly fulfill their part of the contract. Until such a time as the Government is in a position to construct the adequate buildings already planned, it would be advisable that the same fa-

cilities which have been afforded the Veracruz Terminal Company should be given to other similar enterprises and in this way the necessary sheds for the protection of merchandise could be built.

A SHED TO BE BUILT AT THE PORT OF MANZANILLO,

by *Mr. Pedro V. Rincón.*

It is necessary to build a shed at the port of Manzanillo, though it only be temporary, under cover of which goods on transit may be protected from rain and other risks. In this way it would be possible to eliminate one of the causes of the immoderate rise in prices which the said goods fetch under prevailing conditions. Other national ports, Progreso, for instance, are likewise in need of similar sheds.

A BRIDGE TO BE BUILT OVER THE JAMAPA RIVER, by

Mr. A. Juárez.

The railroad from Cordoba to Huatusco suffers frequent interruptions and the traffic between this latter town and Paso del Macho is insufficient, wherefore certain articles at times become excessively high. It is therefore necessary that the Government should construct a bridge over the Jamapa river; the neighbours undertake to build and keep in good condition the high road between Paso del Macho and Huatusco. As that section of the country is very rich in agricultural products (corn, cane, tropical fruits, &c.), the building of the said bridge will benefit innumerable congregations, small ranch gatherings, and haciendas, and the District will achieve the prosperity which it deserves.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF STEAMSHIP LINES WITH FIXED ROUTES AND THE FORMATION OF A MERCANTILE NAVY TRULY NATIONAL, by *Messrs. José Arce, Eduardo Mestre, Arnulfo Peralta, Leopoldo Palacios, Juan Robertson and Francisco Alvarez.*

The improvement of railroad traffic on the one hand and on the other the establishment of national navigation service between our ports and between the latter and foreign countries are both matters of vital importance to our commerce. It is absolutely necessary for us to have steamship lines with well regulated routes, because in that way the distribution of various products would be made easier, the postal service would improve and the transportation of passengers would be regularly and properly done. Ship building enterprises who should lose money instead of making profits should be given financial assistance. It is also patriotic to promote the acquisition of ships devoted to our mercantile navy. This navy should be given decided protection by our Government and our merchants.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMERCIAL SCHOOLS, by *Eng. M. Covarrubias Aceredo.*

The more apt and competent the personnel devoted to the mercantile carrier, the more prosperous will our commerce be. The most cultured countries possess excellent commercial schools. The school at Paris divides its teaching into successive grades of studies. It is our duty within our modest resources, to promote commercial education as being an essential element to the progress of commerce. The Chambers of Commerce, with a small effort, are in a position to establish classes such as short-hand, mecanography, book-keeping, correspondence, mercantile calculations, commercial geography, the knowledge of national and foreign goods, land and water routes, commercial Code, &c. It is therefore urged that the State Governments already possessing establishments of superior education, should open classes where commercial subjects shall be taught.

COMMERCIAL SCHOOLS IN THE REPUBLIC, by *Mr. V. G. de Quesada*.

An adequate commercial education in our country is an urgent necessity. The exercise of commerce if home or foreign, wholesale or retail, requires different preparations but based on a common foundation: a knowledge of exchange, of the tariffs, of the prices and stocks of merchandise in different places, the state of the market which like a barometer should be daily consulted. Commercial education should be given in establishments that fulfill the requirements of hygiene; it shall be both theoretical and practical. The pupils shall be drilled in banking and stock exchange and other kinds of operations. The courses might be divided into two series: one of two years for commercial and bank clerks and employees; and the other of four or five years for young men aspiring to the highest position in the business world. In such schools lectures shall periodically be given on the ornamentation of shop-windows and the exhibition of goods, two things which are of extraordinary importance in our days. Commercial concerns and enterprises shall give preference to graduates from these establishments, as is the practice followed in advanced countries.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMERCIAL SCHOOLS, by *Messrs. Don A. Sanjuanelero and Sons*.

Our country is very rich in natural resources; its geographical situation renders it susceptible of great commercial development; the virtues for which the inhabitants are distinguished, are constancy, tenacity of purpose and nobility of soul. There is one thing wanting viz. adequate training, which is already provided for under fraction 10 article 1 of the existing law of June 12th. 1918 on Chambers of Commerce. The principal school for young men intending to devote themselves to commerce is the example set them by their principals and superiors; and if it is an acknowledged fact that at present the latter are not as honourable and competent as might be desired, it is all the more necessary that we would possess good commercial training establishments.

Cities that count upon young men properly prepared for the practice of commerce are sure to prosper and the latter will find themselves in a position to compete advantageously with foreigners. It would therefore be highly beneficial that a business school be opened in San Luis Potosí; and if it is not possible to establish and sustain it with funds from the Federal Government, the State Executive should be approached upon the subject.

MEASURES WHICH IT IS ADVISABLE TO INSTITUTE IN
ORDER TO PREVENT A POSSIBLE IMMODERATE RISE
IN THE PRICE OF ARTICLES OF PRIME NECESSITY,
by *Messrs. José Arce and Melchor Ayala.*

In order somewhat to prevent an abnormal rise in price of food-stuffs with which we are threatened, the Government has done well to prohibit their exportation. What we still need are the means of easily mobilizing the stock on hand, so that articles may in due time reach those places where they are most needed. The importation of corn, lard and beans should be facilitated and our farmers should be given every security and assistance. The following, in our opinion, are the principal measures to be instituted in order to prevent a possible immoderate rise in price of articles of prime necessity:—

I.—There shall subsist for all length of time that the needs of the Nation should demand a prohibition to export food-stuffs and the Government shall see to it that their orders be strictly complied with.

II.—The railroads shall afford producers and merchants all kinds of facilities in order that the interior mobilization of food-stuffs be carried out with all due efficacy.

III.—That without loss of time corn be brought in from abroad to the value at least of one million pesos, the said corn to be sold at cost price in such places where it is most needed. The Chambers of Commerce are in a position to render very valuable assistance in distributing the corn.

IV.—As the Government has already decreed the free importation of food-stuffs, the only thing now to be done is to obtain from the American railroad companies that it be in their trains and cars that merchandise we need be brought into the interior of our country.

V.—All parties and associations concerned should be urged to do every thing in their power to procure rolling stock for the rapid introduction of food-stuffs already spoken of.

VI.—Steps should be taken to insure the greatest possible security in the transportation of food-stuffs, for cultivating the soil, gathering in the harvests and turning them to the best account. It might perhaps be advisable to organize local militias as has been done in the Manuel Doblado District in Guanajuato.

VII.—The revenue Law should be revised and taxes levied with greater liberality and equity, whereby both farmers and merchants would benefited and in the long run the consumer also.

ADDITIONS TO ARTICLE 1 OF THE INITIATIVE ON
MEASURES WHICH IT IS ADVISABLE TO INSTITUTE
IN ORDER TO PREVENT A POSSIBLE IMMODERATE
RISE IN THE PRICE OF ARTICLES OF PRIME NECES-
SITY, by *Messrs. Francisco M. González and Carlos Arellano.*

The articles the exportation of which should be prohibited are the following: corn, beans, rice, wheat, flour, barley, sugar, and cattle, and those which and other Chamber of Commerce should indicate. It would be well to decree a reduction of 25p^{cs} on freight on imported merchandise to avoid the rise in price of food-stuffs. As no credit institutions exist at present, the Government should advance one million pesos to buy corn, from which amount 1% would be devoted to the purchase of rolling stock. The handling of this million shall be trusted to a committee specially appointed for the purpose, who will turn it over as much as possible, and return it withing six months, as shall be agreed upon. By that time the new crops shall have been gathered and it is to be supposed that these funds will be no longer required. The Chamber of Commerce of the city of Mexico shall request the cooperation of the Federal Chamber of Commerce of Washington, to obtain the corn and the rolling stock under the best possible terms.

MEASURES THAT SHOULD BE INSTITUTED TO COUNTER-
ACT A POSSIBLE ABNORMAL RISE IN ARTICLES OF
PRIME NECESSITY, by *Messrs. Francisco Alvarez and Francis-
co A. Diaz.*

It is unquestionable that the abnormal rise in food-stuffs is now a positive fact and that the lower and the middle classes are very greatly suffering from the scarcity of food. The Chamber of Commerce of the city of Mexico advocated by way of counteracting such conditions, among other things, «facilities, promptitude, economy and security in transportation». In Yucatan, goods can only be shipped by express and the price of consumption has risen considerably. At Progreso thefts are continually being committed: the merchant adds to the price of the foods he sells the value of those whereof he has been robbed. The personnel of the Customs Houses is incompetent. The loading and unloading of goods at Progreso is carried on under deplorable conditions: the number of workmen is very scarce, there are not sufficient piers, lighters and deposit warehouses. Besides, taxes are very high and some of them, for instance the 1,1/2% on bargain and sale contracts, are by no means equitable. The following measures should therefore be instituted:—

I.—To approve the memorandum presented by the Chamber of Commerce of the city of Mexico and to procure present prices to be lowered.

II.—To revise the freight tariffs and reform the railroad staffs putting an end to the corruptive influence of gratuities which in the long run are charged to the consumer.

III.—To reform the personnel of the Customs Houses and to wage a relentless war on theft.

IV.—To procure the greatest possible speed in the loading and unloading of merchandise and the mobilization of articles of prime necessity avoiding loss and damage in transit.

V.—To reduce—or if possible, temporarily to abolish—all taxes whether Federal, State or Municipal, on transactions in articles of prime necessity.

MEASURES THAT SHOULD BE INSTITUTED FOR THE
EVENT OF A POSSIBLE IMMODERATE RISE IN AR-
TICLES OF PRIME NECESSITY, by *Mr. A. E. Padilla.*

The States of the Federation must not place embargos within their territory on articles of prime necessity produced within their boundaries. Impulse shall be given to the construction of the railroad from Durango to Mazatlan and from Cuatro Ciénegas to Sierra Mojada; the navigation service between Tampico and the other Gulf ports should be organized; the telegraphic service especially with the peninsula of Yucatan improved; wireless stations should be built in the principal cities such as Monterrey; local committees should be formed to build high-ways and improve those already existing. It is furthermore necessary to revise the Commercial Code and the tariffs, and to modify taxes both in the Federal District and in the States. Commercial Banks of all kinds should be established for the promotion of Commerce; a good and well founded law of payments should be issued; financing and agricultural banks should be established; our products should be made the subject of study endeavouring to find new means of application therefor; agriculture should be taught; agricultural schools, experimental stations &c. established; practical methods of cultivation popularized; irrigation works, canalization of streams, and a studious investigation of subterranean waters also should be undertaken: the breeding of cattle in general, horses and mules, should be improved; agriculture, cattle and industrial statistics, and meteorological observatories for the benefit of small farmers, should be organized; and lastly, a serious investigation should be made of mineral deposits in our soil, of which our miners still know so little.

MEANS OF REMEDYING THE RISE IN PRICE OF ARTI-
CLES OF PRIME NECESSITY, by *Mr. Adolfo Sánchez.*

In order to remedy the distressing situation which is approaching, a great deal would be gained were the Government to lend its valuable assistance towards procuring facilities in the trans-

portation of food-stuffs. The freight service must be reestablished in all the railroad lines, because the price of goods has risen excessively owing to the heavy rates charged by the express. So far chick-pea (*garbanzo*) has not been considered an article of prime necessity, it would be well however to prohibit its exportation, because although our lower classes do not use it much, it can be turned to account in fattening hogs, and thereby, indirectly, the price of lard can be lowered. The mobilization of food-stuffs could be carried on under favourable conditions if the freight rates were lowered from August to November, and the said food-stuffs—principally corn and beans—would become cheaper or at least would cease to rise. Much would be gained by waging a ruthless war on monopolizers, who do so much harm to small merchants and to the consumer. In order to counteract the shortage of certain grains the latter could be imported from abroad, especially corn. The more this operation be facilitated the more our lower classes will be benefited.

DIVERS MEASURES TENDING TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM
OF THE ABNORMAL RISE IN ARTICLES OF PRIME NE-
CESSITY, by *Messrs. Esteban S. Castorena and Julio Beltrán*,
on behalf of the Mutual Society of Commercial Travellers.

As our object is to find a remedy for the shortage of food-stuffs, which is already causing its baneful consequences to be felt amongst us, the resolutions passed by this Congress upon the subject, should be communicated without delay to the Supreme Government, so that, if deemed efficacious, they be put in practice without loss of time.

It is desirable that the Chambers of Commerce should obtain money for the purchase of cereals; that they request the cooperation of private individuals in this beneficent undertaking, to which purpose they should be granted similar privileges to those enjoyed by the members of the said Chambers; and that in the sale of corn a small margin be left for profit, so that every body may devote themselves to this business out of personal interest, since, unfortunately, amongst us disinterested enterprises as a rule do not meet with success.

The Chambers of Commerce can forthwith help to avert the famine with which we are menaced and is now hovering over our country; a great deal would be gained by this Congress immediately communicating their resolutions to the local Chambers, so that latter start at once upon their work.

Finally, a decree should be issued for the exemption from all taxes in the Republic on articles of prime necessity, and the free transportation of the latter; preference shall be given in the transportation of merchandise, to consignments made to the Chambers of Commerce and other corporations whose work is directed to benefiting the people; the Government shall be petitioned that no tax whatsoever be laid on sales of cereals at establishments set up by the Chambers of Commerce (provided the sales are limited to articles of prime necessity); and endeavours shall be made to solve separately for each State the problem of food-stuffs shortage, because a general resolution applicable to the whole country would be fraught with numberless difficulties when put in practice.

MEASURES SUBMITTED BY THE MUTUAL SOCIETY OF
COMMERCIAL TRAVELLERS TENDING TO PREVENT
THE SHORTAGE AND RISE IN PRICE OF ARTICLES OF
PRIME NECESSITY, by *Julio Beltrán and Esteban S. Castorena*.

Corn and beans should be considered articles of prime necessity, and as regards clothing, cotton fabrics and common *percales* (cotton prints.) We should endeavour to increase the production and importation of these articles; for which purpose it is necessary that corporations be established in the capital of each State and in the most important towns, to be entrusted with the following:—

I.—The collection of funds to be chartered as loans not bearing interest;

II.—The promotion of agricultural work, supplying seeds to small farmers for their crops and helping them on while the harvests arrive;

III.—Receiving and managing the money which the local or Federal Government may devote to the said corporations; and

IV.—The importation and sale of articles of prime necessity (among which shall be included cotton fabrics and *percales* of infe-

rior quality). Above all, farmers should be insured ample guarantees and absolute security, and merchants facilities of transportation. We could also give our natural products such as henequen, raw hemp, hides, &c. in exchange for food-stuffs, and under distressful circumstances limit the individual consumption of food. Lastly it would be advisable to establish in this capital a representative center of all the commercial corporations in the country, to be entrusted with:

(a) the receiving of funds devoted by the Government to the purchase of food-stuffs;

(b) the distribution thereof among the corporations of the States in proportion to their respective wants;

(c) the importation from abroad of grain be equitably distributed throughout the Republic.

INITIATIVE TENDING TO PREVENT A RISE IN THE PRICE OF ARTICLES OF PRIME NECESSITY, by *Mr. Gustavo Caballero*.

As a general rule a merchant's profit does not vary according to the rise in price, the latter being due to an increase of taxes, the multiplicity of imposts, the increase of freight rates, loss and damage in transportation, &c. It would be of great advantage to obtain from the Government that the Federal tax, which is now collected on all kinds of payments, made whether to the Municipalities or to the States Treasuries, be the same as is paid with the same object in the Federal District and Territories, that is: -20% in the first two months, 30% in the second two months, 40% in the third two months &c. It is imperative in the State of Guanajuato that the distribution and amount of taxes with which the merchants are burdened be reconsidered, because under prevailing circumstances they are exceedingly high. It would be most desirable to obtain a reduction of freight rates on articles of prime necessity, consisting in charging for quantities less than the contents of «a full car», according to the tariffs applicable to «full cars»; and in shipments of this kind to apply the tariff minimum. The railroads can be compensated for this difference by increasing the freight rates on pulque, alcohol, tobacco, &c. Trips undertaken in search of articles of prime necessity would increase if merchants were sold kilometer

tickets. No charge should any longer be made for allowing merchandise to be taken out of a town in the Republic. It is most urgent that the personnel of the railroads be moralized, particularly the station masters; no person should be appointed to such a post unless he is able fully to guarantee his honesty and competency.

MEASURES TO BE INSTITUTED TO COUNTERACT THE
RISE IN PRICE OF ARTICLES OF PRIME NECESSITY,
by *Mr. Miguel Montaña*.

The present crisis is due to our political disturbances and to the European struggle. In our country natural products have never been sufficient to cover the needs of the people: this is owing to the fact that great tracts of land remain uncultivated and, at present, through the general insecurity and the presence of bandits and enemies of the Government in different parts, the sections under cultivation are still fewer than before. It is indispensable that delegations from the Chambers of Commerce or from this National Congress of Merchants be established in first-second and third-class towns, in order that, without the remotest idea of gain and with the help of agencies and subagencies they may promote agricultural work, endeavoring to increase the bean, chick-pea and wheat crops (by chance rain) and the corn crop (by artificial irrigation). The delegations, being naturally well acquainted with the necessities of their respective localities, can undertake to procure labourers, agricultural implements, oxen, &c. All the expenses incurred can be met by means of a especial tax or a special loan. The profound immorality which has corrupted our railroad freight service must also be put a stop to. No more personal permissions shall be granted to import foreign goods free of taxes. The freight and express services are in the worst possible condition. At Sayula, merchandise is left at the Station weeks on end without its being transported. At that town an unwarranted tax on articles of prime necessity is collected. The revenue office at Jalisco most unjustly demands that every shipment of goods be invoiced. An unjust monopoly of hides is going on the same State. All these irregularities must be made to cease without delay, as they indirectly injure the

consumer or in other words the entire population. The corruption of the railroad employees is susceptible of being corrected, provided the general management were given timely notice of the abuses by them committed.

CERTAIN MEASURES TENDING TO PROCURE THE REDUCTION OF PRICES OF ARTICLES OF PRIME NECESSITY, by *Mr. Arturo E. Padilla*.

The Government should exercise its powerful influence, in order that the States may not lay embargos on merchandise of prime necessity and that merchants be furnished a sufficient number of freight cars, as only by this means will an easy distribution of food-stuffs in the country be accomplished. It is necessary that all sorts of interstate taxes be abolished. The prohibition to export food-stuffs is imperative, as also a strict care that such prohibition be rigorously obeyed. No effort should be stinted to moralize the personnel of the railroads. Freight rates should be reduced and not be paid for in advance. It would be highly beneficial to relieve from all customs, consular, stamp, and municipal taxation all articles considered as of prime necessity for our people. The following suggestions are most important towards the attainment of our object:—the formation of rural police corps in agricultural districts to duly insure public security; to strive to intensify cultivation; not to allow the Government's attention to be distracted over these matters, nor that its resources be employed in this connection, but simply to request its assistance in the form already expressed. It is necessary to call the attention of the Government to the most pressing necessities of the moment, it being notorious how good and patriotic are its intentions in every respect

MEASURES TENDING TO COUNTERACT A POSSIBLE RISE
IN ARTICLES OF PRIME NECESSITY, by *Mr. E. M. de la Garza*.

The solution of the problem of the shortage of food-stuffs depends above all on agricultural work. In consequence, the following measures are obviously advisable:—

(a) the exemption from taxes on agricultural implements imported from abroad;

(b) the sowing of corn in the court-yards of dwelling houses, public and private gardens, and the fields in the neighbourhood of towns, to which effect a patriotic call shall be made to all the citizens of the Republic;

(c) to offer a prize every year to the person producing the largest amount of corn, beans or wheat;

(d) to establish a credit bank to loan out money to farmers while the harvests arrive;

(e) to raise the taxes on uncultivated and to diminish those on cultivated land.

With regard to the shortage of rolling stock, it is necessary:—

I.—To keep a register of orders for cars, a copy of which shall be sent to the Department of Industry and Commerce;

II.—To dispatch the said cars by strict order of turns;

III.—To give preference to cars loaded with articles of prime necessity;

IV.—To impose heavy fines on infringements of these orders;

V.—To urge merchants to refrain from giving gratuities to the conductors, train dispatchers, yard masters, &c.;

VI.—To reduce both the express and freight rates on articles of prime necessity;

VII.—To lower the freight rates on coasting-trade vessels;

VIII.—To establish an insurance company for the loss in transportation in the interior of the country of articles of prime necessity;

IX.—To decree the exemption from duty of food-stuffs imported from abroad;

X.—To prohibit the exportation of articles of prime necessity, at the same time pointing out which are to be regarded as such;

XI.—To prevent contraband attempting to take food-stuffs out of our country;

XII.—To inform our Consuls abroad of all the measures instituted with regard to these matters;

XIII.—To prevent certain grains from being transformed into other articles, as for instance corn into starch;

XIV.—The exemption from of advertisements relative to food-stuffs.

In the event of the foregoing measures not producing the desired results, the following shall have to be resorted to:—

(a) to punish brokers that traffic with the poverty of the people;

(b) to order the producers to sell only to established firms in order to avoid the monopoly that private individuals might possibly attempt;

(c) to compel wholesalers to sell only to retailers;

(d) to order the retailers to demand memorandums or invoices wherewith to justify their transactions;

(e) to order wholesale merchants to sell their goods to the retailers at wholesale prices with a small surcharge sufficient to cover losses in transportation; and

(f) to regulate and promote fishing, shooting and hunting in the Republic.

Should these regulations be not sufficient to control the situation, it will be necessary to prohibit the exportation of food-stuffs and to appoint a food dictator.

INITIATIVE ON ARTICLES OF PRIME NECESSITY, by
Messrs. Diego Santa Cruz, Rafael Fuentes, J. M. Raz and Tomás Pacheco.

The shortage of food-stuffs which we are suffering warrants the application on the following measures as a remedy thereto:—

I.—The Governors of the States shall bring the merchants together, urging them to import the largest possible amount of articles of prime necessity and to be satisfied with a profit of only 10%.

II.—The town councils shall bring the farmers of the District together and shall promote agricultural production.

III.—Small farmers shall be assisted by having money advanced to them to be paid back under certain conditions, and the Municipalities shall render them all the help within their power.

IV.—A central commission of food-stuffs shall be instituted in each one of the States, which shall organize and regulate the production, distribution and consumption of food-stuffs, and the mutual aid to be given by one State to another.

RISE IN THE PRICE OF ARTICLES OF PRIME NECESSITY AND THE PRINCIPAL ADMINISTRATIVE MEASURES TO BE INSTITUTED AS A REMEDY THERETO, by *Mr.*

Jose L. Cossio.

Our present economical crisis has been brought by the recent armed movements and the financial anarchy which prevails. The European war has not contributed to our internal difficulties, because if the exportation of our effects were the cause of our shortage, we would possess metallic wealth in abundance, whereas we are suffering penury both as regards food-stuffs and specie. In more prosperous times the expenses of the Nation amounted to one hundred million pesos; at present, the figures are two hundred million. The increased taxation in many cases is equivalent to the confiscation of the property; it exhausts the sources of wealth and nips industries in the bud (as happened with the coffee planters at the time of the Brazil difficulties). There are at present certain unjust taxes in force, as for instance those charged by the Municipalities under the name of duties on introduction and consumption and on importation. Others there are far from equitable, as for example the water tax. Wherefore it is expedient:—

I.—To abolish all unlawful taxation, such as the interstate duties, which under various names are at present in force in this capital.

II.—Not to burden the contributors of the nation with immoderate taxes.

III.—To issue the law on Municipal organization under which the power to impose taxes shall be limited, and to establish that Municipalities incapable of self-support be suppressed and merged into other neighbouring ones.

THE NECESSITY OF PROTECTING CENTRES OF PRODUCTION IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF WAYS OF COMMUNICATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF PREVENTING A FUTURE RISE IN PRICE OF ARTICLES OF PRIME NECESSITY, by *Mr. Vicente Sarli*.

The security of the planter, the real producer of wealth, is the primary condition for public well-being and for lowering the price of food-stuffs. If the most important producing districts of the country continue to be without guarantees we shall always be threatened with famine. It is therefore necessary most energetically to guarantee public safety in districts such as Santa Rosalia Camargo in the State of Chihuahua, which under normal conditions is capable of sending to the interior of the country a daily car-load of flour, apart from other products such as corn, cotton and fruit. That district has the use of the La Boquilla dam, with its magnificent hydraulic works, developing fifty thousand H. P., a force principally used in the mineral zone of Hidalgo del Parral.

A PROJECT FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMMERCIAL ASSOCIATION AND THE INSTITUTION OF AN OFFICIAL EXCHANGE AS A MEANS OF COUNTERACTING THE RISE IN PRICE OF ARTICLES OF PRIME NECESSITY, by *Mr. Alberto Islas*.

Since, owing to the shortage of specie, this is the sole means of exchange amongst us the price of food-stuffs is unceasingly rising. Only by means of a frank and open commercial cooperation can prices be lowered, for which purpose it is necessary to establish a joint stock company (under the name of «Commercial Association of the Congress of Merchants»), with a capital of two million pesos divided into four thousand shares of \$500.00 each. With the object of bringing about a speedy reduction of the prices of articles of prime necessity, the Association should be granted the following privileges by the Government:

(a) a reduction of 50% on freight of goods consigned to the Association;

(b) preference in the transportation of its merchandise and the necessary military escorts to protect them, and

(c) a discount of 50% on the fiscal taxes which it should otherwise have to pay.

The said society to be governed by a Board of Directors formed by ten members selected from the different Chambers of Commerce; the President to be the President of the Chamber of Commerce of the city of México. The cooperation which the united efforts resulting from the establishment of the said Association would bring about as an immediate consequence the lowering of prices and the reduction of profits, on the part of the merchants, to a small and just margin. The stock exchange should be put into the hands of licensed brokers. Lastly, the project for the constitution of this society should be reconsidered, and the steps necessary for its organization should be taken as the final results will undoubtedly prove highly beneficial.

The Association which is hereby proposed to be founded has for its object the protection of the proletariat and the middle class against the rapacity of merchants and speculators. The scheme therefore deserves careful consideration and if approved should be put in practice with the greatest activity and efficacy.

The premium charged by licensed brokers acting as intermediaries in transactions of any sort will be less than what is usually paid to day; the said brokers are officially given public credit and their conduct is guaranteed, wherefore they amply fill the qualification of honourability. If the official stock exchange were to be by them established prices would become more stable, as they would be fixed according to the price offered by the producer and speculation would very much diminish. A exchange thus organized would render valuable services to the Chambers of Commerce and to the Government, and the latter would undoubtedly reap excellent profits.

A SURCHARGE OF 10% ON TICKETS FOR PUBLIC AMUSEMENTS DEVOTING THE AMOUNT TO THE PURCHASE OF ARTICLES OF PRIME NECESSITY TO BE DISTRIBUTED AMONG POOR FAMILIES, by *Mr. V. G. de Quevedo*.

In Paris and other great cities entrance tickets to public spectacles and amusements are surcharged 10%, which is devoted to beneficent purposes. It behooves us to follow this example and

of the amount thus collected, one half should be devoted to the purchase and storage of food-stuffs, and the other half to sowing adequate lands, to acquire agricultural implements, to bore artesian wells, &c. The Chambers of Commerce shall be entrusted with the collection and management of this additional 10%, and in any event they could assist the Government in the matter to great advantage.

REASONS FOR THE ADVANCED PRICE OF CERTAIN ARTICLES OF PRIME NECESSITY, by *Mr. Marcos Huerta*.

One of the principal factors in the increase of price of food-stuffs (especially corn) is the prohibition established by certain local authorities to remove the grain from places where it is kept stored. In commercial interchange no further limitation should be set than that already placed by Federal Government, relative to the exportation of articles of prime necessity. The greater the facilities for traffic and transportation, the cheaper will effects become and greater will be the efficacy in transporting them in due season to districts threatened with shortage. Another reason for this progressive and alarming advance in price of food-stuffs is the lust of gain which prevails among producers and wholesalers. They raise their prices considerably without any just cause therefor. In Tlaxcala the price of corn has risen fivefold within only a few months, notwithstanding that neither freights, salaries or taxes have been increased.

CERTAIN MEASURES RELATIVE TO AGRICULTURE TENDING TO PREVENT THE RISE IN PRICE OF ARTICLES OF PRIME NECESSITY, by *Lic. E. Mestre, G.*

The European war and the part which the United States are taking therein contribute to render our economical conditions more difficult. The following are measures that will somewhat relieve our situation:—

1st.—The Supreme Government shall guarantee by every means within its power the security of all who devote themselves to agricultural pursuits.

2nd.—The Executives of the Union and of the States shall reduce as much as possible the taxes with which agricultural production is now burdened.

3rd.—In the distribution and fractioning of land, the production and the interests of the nation shall be principally considered, in order that such operations may not under prevailing circumstances contribute to diminish the yield of our soil.

4th.—In view of the great scarcity of peons and animals of work, a total exemption of customs duties shall be decreed on agricultural implements, as well as a reduction of 50% on railroad tariffs.

CROPS IN MEXICO, by *Mr. Donaciano López.*

Our neutrality in the world war keeps us economically isolated and lays upon us the obligation of ourselves ministering to our own necessities. Our crops constitute the national problem if we regard our situation as that of convalescents from a protracted civil war, and also if we take into consideration the immense profit to be derived, after satisfying the necessities of our own people, from being in a position to become an exporting country. We should therefore endeavour to increase the yield of our lands, not by means of intensive cultivation (which requires a long preparation of the people and previous careful study) but by means of extensive cultivation employing our primitive agricultural methods.

In order to become familiar with the condition of the resources, lands, labourers, and capital, in the different sections of the country, a congress of farmers, possessing a profound knowledge of the State that each may represent, should be convened. As regards «land», the confiscation of tillable uncultivated land becomes imperative, placing the said land under the jurisdiction of the town councils for as long a time as the critical circumstances should demand.

Labourers to till the land would not be wanting, because their present scarcity is due to the very low wages they are offered. If the farm hand were better paid and his economical condition bettered, he would be recognized all the importance which he actually possesses as productive factor.

The State Governments and the town councils should proceed to form commissions for the promotion of agriculture. Such commissions should undertake to collect funds to be received by them

in the nature of loans with a fixed rate of interest. These commissions, to be composed of the leading citizens of each locality, would make the farmers advances on their future crops, in due time taking over the entire production, thereby contributing not only to increase the yield of the land but to make the distribution of wealth more equitable. If the said commissions could be made to serve as intermediaries between the farmer and the consumer, speculators and unscrupulous traders, whose margin for profit has so large a share in the increase of prices, would be excluded from the transactions. In the capital, the Chamber of Commerce would have to undertake the collection of funds and the performance of all the other functions already pointed out as pertaining to the commissions. The Congress of Farmers would pass upon all questions of detail (cattle for instance), as none could attend to these matters with a more perfect knowledge of the special needs of each section of the country. Lastly the intervention of the mentioned Congress as the purchaser of the crops, or rather as intermediary between the producer and the consumer, would remove all the difficulties inherent to a perfect distribution of food-stuffs.

COMPULSORY SOWING IN THE REPUBLIC, by *Mr. Angel Montaña*.

The price of cereals has risen due to their shortage. The Municipalities possess large tracts of uncultivated land and the inhabitants lack the means of subsistence. Some land owners through egoism prefer to keep their lands uncultivated rather than handing them over to others who are in a position to seed and render them productive. Under prevailing circumstances, a law compelling every body to keep no land uncultivated would be justified. Wherefore such a law should be issued making compulsory, by reason of public utility, the seeding of all land susceptible of cultivation.

**COMPULSORY AGRICULTURAL TRAINING IN ALL THE
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS OF THE REPUBLIC, by Mr. An-
gel Montaño.**

Complementing the object of our elementary training, and in order to direct it to a useful purpose, it is necessary to characterize as obligatory the theoretico-practical notions of agriculture which are taught in our primary schools. It is the children of our people who principally attend these establishments; these children can and should be initiated in the knowledge of the most practical agricultural systems and methods, and they should be taught to love modern implements which so much facilitate the work of a farm. The farm hand who knows how to till his land by the use of machinery, will earn higher wages and will materially, morally and intellectually become a better man. Therefore, the theoretico-practical teaching of agriculture, if made obligatory in our elementary schools throughout the country, will prove most beneficial in its results.

THE DIVISION OF LAND AND CROPS AND THEIR RELATION TO THE PRODUCTION OF ARTICLES OF PRIME NECESSITY, by Mr. Rafael Solís.

In San Martin Texmelucan the Military Command charges a tax for every bundle of merchandise that leaves the district. This same Post Command has taken upon itself to distribute land, a great deal of which remains uncultivated because it has fallen into the hands of negligent parties. Moreover, the individuals thus favoured have no confidence in the distribution having been made by a incompetent authority; they do not know how they will ultimately stand, whether as co-partners in, or as owners of, the said lands; they are afraid that such distribution may not be ultimately sanctioned by the Government; and they have to perform certain obligations imposed upon them by the Post Commander already mentioned. As a consequence of all this, the crops will diminish considerably. Finally, public security leaves much to be desired

in that section, assaults and thefts of stored grain continuously taking place. The Government ought to decree that no distribution of land be made without the prior sanction and knowledge of the National Agrarian Commission.

MEASURES SUBMITTED BY THE DELEGATION FROM
QUERETARO AS A REMEDY FOR THE WANT OF CORN
AND OTHER CEREALS, by *Messrs. Amador E. Ugalde, Pedro
Fernández and Jesús M. Espinosa.*

The lands which were tilled under normal conditions cannot be cultivated for reasons well known to all. The rains have come tardily this year and the corn crops will not be ready before October. If frosts set in early this corn will be lost. Moreover, according to information from the governors of the different States of the Republic, corn is what is most scarce everywhere. In view of all of which it is necessary:—

(a) to obtain this grain from abroad, even though it entail a sacrifice and extraordinary efforts;

(b) to commission certain members of this Congress to approach the Secretary of Industry and Commerce and the President of the Republic on the subject, pointing out that this work fits into the revolutionary ideals, and

(c) to offer the Chief Executive of the Nation the assistance of the Chambers of Commerce.

EMBARGO ON THE EXPORTATION OF ARTICLES OF PRIME
NECESSITY AND THE PROHIBITION OF USING
CORN FOR THE MANUFACTURE OF STARCH AND AL-
COHOL, by *Mr. Ignacio Cardoso and S. de T.*

Whereas the orders prohibiting the exportation of articles of prime necessity are frequently infringed, the Government should be requested to redouble their vigilance in this regard.

The stock of corn (which is the principal element of food of our lower classes) is barely sufficient to meet the needs of the people; it is therefore of the greatest importance that the use of this grain in the manufacture of starch and alcohol be prohibited.

EXPORTATION OF CORN FROM THE UNITED STATES INTO MEXICO, by *Messrs. Roberto Garza Cabello and Fernando C. Gámez.*

Corn is the article of prime necessity which has the greatest consumption amongst us and is at the same time the most scarce. The United States Government has forbidden the exportation of food-stuffs to neutral countries. Efforts should therefore be made to procure without delay, from the Government of the neighbouring Republic, the permission to export the said cereal into our country.

PRODUCTION, TRANSPORTATION AND MONOPOLY OF CORN, by *Mr. A. A. Altamirano.*

For the purpose of enlightening the judgment of the Executive Board of this Congress and of the Committee entrusted to report on the measures to be instituted to remedy the shortage of food-stuffs with which we are menaced, it should be resolved that each one of the members of this Congress present, inform upon the following points so far as concerns the district by him represented:—

I.—Is the last corn crop sufficient to meet the demand until the next harvest is gathered?

II.—Is the stock greater than the consumption and if so can the excess be withdrawn from any particular district without serious detriment thereto?

III.—From what section of the country may corn be obtained under conditions as favourable as, or more so than, in the United States?

IV.—An approximate estimate of the quantity of corn required for the consumption of the people until the next crops.

V. —Difficulties in transportation and means of remedying the same.

VI.—Measures to be instituted to prevent an immoderate rise in the price of corn.

A PROJECT TENDING TO REMEDY THE DIFFICULTIES
ARISING FROM THE SHORTAGE OF WHEAT SEED, by
Mr. J. E. Macías.

Small farmers lack the element of «capital», and cannot therefore obtain seeds, animals and agricultural implements, &c. for their work. Our small land owner will have to apply to money lenders to be able to purchase their seeds at the proper time. The Department of Agriculture, by way of experiment, has been supplying seeds to farmers for their lands. It is necessary that the said Department should go still further and sell, on short time payments, seed for the next wheat sowing; steps should therefore be taken in order that the Budget Commission of the Chamber of Deputies insert in the budget the relative appropriation for the purchase of the seed mentioned.

BRIEF NOTES CONCERNING THE STOCK AND POSSIBLE
PRODUCTION OF CERTAIN ARTICLES OF PRIME NE-
CESSITY, IN THE DISTRICT OF MONTEMORELOS, N.
L., by *Mr. T. Barocio.*

The stock of corn in the District of Montemorelos, N. L., is sufficient to meet local needs; and the next crops, which have already begun to be gathered, will permit of a certain amount thereof to be transferred to any other point of the Republic where it may be needed. It is estimated that eight hundred tons of corn can be afforded to be sent out to alleviate the shortage in any other part of the country. The lack of rain has been the cause of the brown sugar production diminishing 35%; there will hardly be fifty tons left after covering the local consumption.

Strenuous efforts must be made to uproot certain immoral practices, such as gratuities and tips in connection with the providing of empty cars; likewise some abuses which are committed by the militaries in sown land. This is the cause of much distrust among the farmers who will till only the land that is less visible from the highroads, whereby national production is very greatly affected; and in the long run the consumers, or be it the people, are the ones who will have to pay the damages.

INITIATIVE TENDING TO PREVENT THE EXPORTATION OF HIDES AND TO REDUCE THE SLAUGHTER OF CATTLE TO BE SOLD AS MEAT, by *Mr. J. E. Macías*.

One of the principal reasons why agriculture cannot be given the desired impulse is the shortage of oxen and work animals in general. This shortage comes:—

1st., from the great consumption of cattle during the Revolution;

2nd., from the amount stolen by bandits; and

3rd., from the excessive slaughter carried on in the principal cities for the supply of meat.

The rebel and bandit chiefs disposed of the cattle:—

I.—By consuming insignificant quantities for food;

II.—By surreptitious sales; and

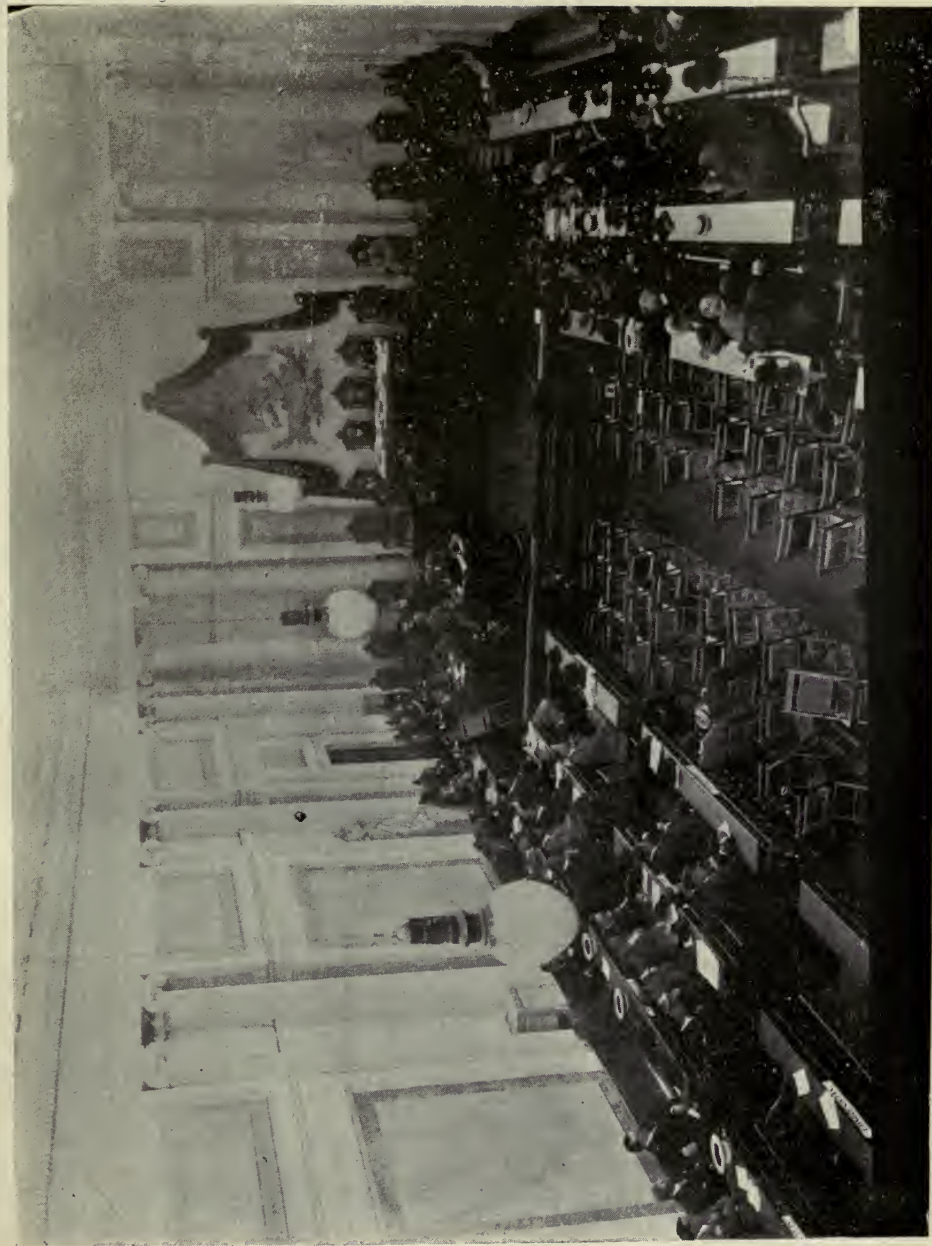
III.—By slaughtering it to export the hides.

These animals become more scarce every day and the price of meat in the market is unceasingly rising. Cattle breeders prefer to sell their cattle (thereby getting excellent returns) to keeping it with the danger of its being stolen, as unfortunately now so frequently happens. It is therefore necessary to take the following measures:—

(a) to prevent the exportation of hides of ill-gotten animals; and

(b) to reduce the slaughter of cattle for consumption in the Republic, and duly to regulate the consumption of meat.

FIRST NATIONAL CONGRESS OF MERCHANTS



Session of the Congress held at the Academy Hall of the School of Engineers.

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE CONGRESS.

THE MORALIZATION OF THE MERCHANT.

It was *voted* that *Whereas*:—The First National Congress of Merchants is convinced of the significance of the moralization of merchants, not only in so far as concerns the latter but also the Community in general, and considering the importance of the report submitted by Messrs. Juan de M. Contreras, Sealtiel L. Alatrisme and Manuel H. San Juan; be it

Resolved: — that the Congress accept this report and assume the responsibility of the contents thereof, as if it were its own, and that the said study be forwarded to the Department of Industry and Commerce, together with the request that it be given all due consideration and such measures as in consequence may be deemed fit be duly instituted.

THE PARTICIPATION WHICH THE CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE SHOULD HAVE IN THE MORALIZATION OF THE BODY COMMERCIAL AND IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES.

It was *voted* that *Whereas*:—the Chambers of Commerce through their social influence and the number and standing

of the merchants who form part thereof, are called upon to perform a most important part in the moralization of merchants;

Whereas:—the public on their part can and should make efforts in the same direction, by organizing cooperative societies to lower the price of certain articles and to reduce undue speculation to the minimum; be it

Resolved:—that the First National Congress of Merchants most earnestly urge Chambers of Commerce of the Republic requesting them:—

1st.—Strictly to enforce the clauses under their rules and regulations that prescribe the morality of the members and to display the greatest activity in order to increase the number of those already existing;

2nd.—That each Chamber elect from among its members a jury composed of three, whose duty it shall be to study such complaints as may be received from the public or from any other source, against their colleagues, and to apply the due corrective, by means of warning, «disqualification,» denouncing the facts to the authorities, &c., &c., as the case may be; and

3rd.—That those that form the Confederation of the Chambers of Commerce of the Republic, furnish one another and directly the confederate merchants, such data as may be requested concerning the solvency, honorability, antecedents, &c., of the associates, always within the relative regulations of each Chamber, which it shall be endeavoured shall all be uniform.

Resolved:—that the First National Congress of Merchants likewise ask the Department of Industry and Commerce, the Chambers of Commerce of the Republic, and other similar corporations, that each within its own sphere of action, undertake active propaganda work to procure the establishment of cooperative societies throughout the whole Republic, soliciting for them the support and assistance of the Federal and local Governments and authorities; and that the Perma-

nent Commission of the Congress be especially entrusted with this matter and be urged most diligently to carry on the said propaganda, reporting the results at the next National Congress of Merchants.

AMENDMENTS TO BE MADE TO CERTAIN LAWS IN ORDER TO CORRECT VARIOUS IMMORAL PRACTICES CARRIED ON IN COMMERCE.

It was *voted* that *Whereas*:—in the midst of the difficult circumstances under which the country is labouring, the National Body Commercial has given evidence of their morality as a Body;

Whereas:—regarding legal morality, many of our laws have been and continue to be immoral;

Whereas:—the frequent complaints of frauds committed by promoters of joint stock companies and the impunity of the culprits are due to deficiencies of the laws governing the matter;

Whereas:—the Sanitary Code likewise permits certain frauds detrimental to the bona fide merchant;

Whereas:—the simulations of trade marks de facto constitute a fraud wrongly sanctioned by the law, and the registering of all such trade marks, as directly or indirectly tend to deceive or to cause the purchaser to incur error, should be prohibited;

Whereas:—the confederacies formed artificially to raise the price of merchandise or to export the same at a loss, although lawful, are none the less reproachable;

Whereas:—cattle stealing is an every-day occurrence and a source of serious evils to the trading of cattle;

Whereas:—in order to moralize the commercial community in general, it is expedient to establish guilds, whose business it shall be strictly to watch the personal morality of each one of the associates; be it

Resolved:—that the First National Congress of Merchants submit:—

I.—That the Department of Industry and Commerce appoint commissions entrusted to collect the necessary data and study the initiatives to be presented to the relative offices for the purpose of procuring the amendment, in the sense above indicated, of the precepts governing joint stock companies, the Sanitary Code and the Law on trade marks.

II.—That the said State Department appoint a commission to study every thing relative to leagues or confederacies, formed for the purpose of artificially raising the price of goods, and to the exportation of merchandise at a loss, which aims at the same purpose, and to suggest the precepts and measures to be instituted for the prevention thereof.

III.—That the Agricultural Society of Mexico be commissioned to address similar institutions in the Republic, requesting their cooperation to study the best means of preventing the crime of cattle theft and the fraudulent commerce which such crime entails.

IV.—That the Chamber of Commerce of this capital, jointly with the Permanent Commission of the First National Congress of Merchants, study the expediency and manner of organizing the «Merchants' Guild» for the assistance and moralization of merchants.

COMMERCIAL EDUCATION.

It was *voted* that *Whereas*: the First National Congress of Merchants is firmly convinced that commercial education is one of the most efficacious means of promoting home and foreign trade, inasmuch as it tends to form specialists well prepared for so important an activity, be it

Resolved: 1.—That the official establishments whereat commercial education is given be every day more numerous;

so that there may exist at least one commercial school in each of the State capitals and in each of the most important towns of the said States.

2.—That the various Chambers of Commerce in the Republic establish annex commercial schools, according as their resources may permit and the needs of the various localities demand.

3.—That in order to meet the various requirements of commercial education, the schools whereat the latter be given, both official and dependent on the Chambers of Commerce, shall be divided into two classes: elemental and high schools. The former shall comprise a two years' course, to be given during hours compatible with commercial business hours; they shall aim at awakening commercial vocation and forming commercial employees and shall serve as preparatory to the high schools. The latter shall divide their subjects into at least four courses of one year each and shall serve to train students for the following careers: Commercial Traveller, Accountant, Candidate to Accountant, Candidate to Broker, Candidate to the Consular and Commercial careers. Supplementary to the Universities shall be established advanced commercial courses, for the purpose of perfecting the knowledge acquired at the high commercial schools and of training future business managers, bankers, etc.

4.—That the education to be given at the various commercial schools shall be fundamentally «nationalist», that is purposing above all to encourage the love of country and consequently the desire of becoming well acquainted with it, so as to contribute to increase its production and augment its wealth; it shall likewise be as practical as possible, in such a way that the students not only may be made familiar with the functions of the various activities that constitute commercial life, but also that «they may personally put them into practice», making use, for this purpose, of the elements available at the schools themselves, and of those which the

various commercial and industrial concerns and the relative museums may be in a position to furnish; and that ethics and hygiene be necessarily included in the programme, in order that the students may little by little adapt their conduct to the lofty interests and practices of the community.

5.—That the local or Federal Governments, as the case may be, shall grant an annual subsidy to the schools supported by the Chambers of Commerce, at least until the said institutions be able to support themselves and that, in general, they shall render them all the moral and material assistance possible, for the better attainment of their purpose.

6.—That the schools supported by the Chambers of Commerce shall as far as possible follow the same plan of studies as the official schools, with the object of facilitating students passing from one school to another, and of procuring uniformity in commercial education. The aforementioned schools shall be preferently night-schools, in order that commercial employees, especially, be given the opportunity of attending the classes and benefiting thereby; but the schools shall be permitted to add other courses to their programme, according as their resources may permit and the needs of the locality demand.

7.—That the Chambers of Commerce shall cooperate together with the official commercial schools in every thing tending to improve the education given thereat, to which end they shall express opinion on the plans of studies, programmes and methods of commercial training; when requested, they shall furnish experts to lecture on their respective specialities; they shall make the necessary arrangements for business concerns and factories to allow the students access to their stores, so that the former may thus complete their practical studies; a certain number of students shall be granted admittance to the said business houses and factories, under special conditions to be established in each particular case, in order that they may there acquire their practical training properly speaking, and the Chambers

shall concern themselves in regard to the constant improvement of the commercial museums.

8.—That the relative official institutions shall cooperate together with the Chambers of Commerce imparting commercial training, in everything tending to the greatest possible development of the latter, whether by donating books, utensils and other school equipment, or by providing special professors and lecturers, when it may be necessary, and likewise examiners.

9.—That the Central Chamber of Mexico shall have an annex educational department, where all questions may be studied relative to the commercial education to be imparted in official or private establishments, the reforms which it may be deemed suitable to initiate, and generally, where care be devoted to the improvement of these important activities.

10.—That the commercial museums in the Republic, both the official and such as from time to time the various Chambers of Commerce may establish, be properly utilized for the benefit of commercial education, for which purpose all the necessary facilities shall be afforded the professors and students of schools of this nature.

11.—That when it be deemed opportune, both the Government and the Chambers of Commerce shall bring to the country a certain number of foreign experts to implant certain teachings or methods of unquestionable advantage; and that a number of deserving students from the different commercial schools, or already formed merchants, shall be periodically sent abroad at the expense of the Government or of the Chambers or of both, to improve themselves in certain special branches, and at the same time take advantage of the opportunity to promote our commercial relations with other countries.

12.—That the Government, under even circumstances, shall give preference in Government and especially in Consular Service appointments, to the graduates from the commer-

-cial schools of the Chambers or from those of the Government, the knowledge and experience thus acquired rendering the candidates particularly qualified for such posts.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMERCIAL MUSEUMS.

It was *voted* that *Whereas*: one of the means to be employed to procure the development of our commerce is the establishment of commercial museums and exhibitions in certain cities of the country and also abroad, such exhibitions being efficaciously well adapted to advertise all the products of a country;

Whereas: in conformity with the project for the organization of the Chambers of Commerce, the principal institutions of this kind in the Republic shall form commercial museums, there only remaining to take the necessary steps for the establishment of such exhibitions abroad; it was

Resolved: that the First National Congress of Merchants shall solicit the support of the Federal Government in order that, relying upon the cooperation of the Chambers of Commerce, it shall endeavour duly to establish the said museums annexed to the Consulates in certain cities. To begin with the following cities may be recommended: New York, Chicago, San Antonio, San Francisco, St. Louis Missouri, Paris, Hamburg, Genoa, Liverpool, Barcelona, &c. These museums shall furnish all kind of information relative to national products.

THE PRESERVATION OF THE EXISTING BANKS.

It was *voted* that *Whereas*: our sources of wealth are being impaired by the present lack of circulation of values, specie, instruments of credit, &c., and that the total liquidation of our banks necessarily upsets and paralyzes the commercial movement of the country, it was

Resolved:—that the First National Congress of Merchants request the Government of the Republic, that, without injuring the rights and privileges of the Sole Bank of Issue, the survival of the banks which are at present under attachment be permitted and facilitated, and that legal capacity for their becoming financing or any other kind of institutions, be duly recognized.

WAYS OF COMMUNICATION.

It was *voted* that *Whereas*: the ways of communication, especially the railroads, are most important organs for the proper working and development of commerce, and if they do not duly fulfill their object, the Body Commercial and consequently the whole community is seriously impaired by the consequent evils;

Whereas: the railroads are intimately connected with the life of commerce and it is therefore necessary that the Government Department (Industry and Commerce) that is perfectly familiar with the conditions of this element of wealth, should take an active part in the work to be discharged by the railroad companies, it was

Resolved: that the First National Congress of Merchants ask the Supreme Government of the Republic to be pleased to consider the following project when the law on railroads be amended:

A branch railroad department shall be established within the Department of Industry and Commerce, having the following dependencies:

A.—An Executive Board composed of seven members: three to be appointed by the Department itself; two representing the railroads, to be appointed by the latter, and two to be appointed by this Assembly, to represent Industry and Commerce.

B.—A revisory committee on tariffs, contracts, agreements, &c.

C.—A section for inspectors.

D.—A section for statistics.

E.—An advisory section for claims and complaints.

The foregoing to be established without detriment to the Department of Industry and Commerce giving the whole a better organization, should it deem it advisable.

Likewise, be it

Resolved: that the First National Congress of Merchants shall ask the Government to endeavour that the following measures be instituted, by whom it may correspond, for the purpose of remedying the shortage of rolling stock and of reducing freight charges:—

I.—*Measures for remedying the shortage of rolling stock.*

1st.—To urge shippers to load their cars to their full capacity.

2nd.—To urge consigners and consignees to employ the least possible amount of time in loading and unloading car loads; for which purpose the railroad shall establish a service whereby due notice shall be sent the consignee of the arrival of the cars, the party interested having previously given his address.

3rd.—To urge the railroads to have local freight cars (with the exception of car loads) loaded to their full cubic capacity, for which purpose they shall appoint inspectors to see that these orders be carried out.

4th.—Cars repaired at the expense of private parties shall be handled by the railroads themselves.

5th.—Private car owners wishing to avoid the expense of haulage of empty cars, shall permit the railroads to handle their cars.

II.—*Measures tending to reduce freight charges.*

1st.—To allow 10% discount on freight in excess of the minimum weight or on the excess that may result over the minimum the car being loaded to its full capacity, when cars be loaded within their capacity with a weight greater than the minimum fixed by the circulars.

2nd.—Express rates on car loads shall be modified making them more equitable, because those now applied are rather high.

3rd.—To abolish as immoral the surcharge of 25% on freight charges, which certain railroads have established for granting preferent cars.

4th.—Freight charges shall be applicable to documentary express shipments if goods are not delivered to the consignee within five days from the date on which they should arrive at their destination, according to the passenger—train time—table, cases of superior force of course excepted.

5th.—To abolish attachments, such as now practised by the Mexican Railroad, prohibiting the shipment of goods by freight, whereby shippers are compelled to have their goods receipted and forwarded by express.

6th.—The «Railroad rules and regulations» on car traffic, establishing a preference in the case of cattle, fruit, and articles of prime necessity, and in general of things which easily turn bad, shall be strictly observed. In this way many shippers will be able to avoid receipting and forwarding their goods by express, as they will have a right of preference in regard to cars and traffic.

7th.—The circular relative to special freight trains shall be amended, in the sense that a minimum of 250 tons shall be required from each consigner to each consignee for the railroad to furnish a special train service, the rate therefore of \$2.00 per kilometer per locomotive when the rolling stock be

the property of the company and \$1.00 per kilometer per locomotive when it be private property, being revoked.

8th.—To prohibit private shipping companies operating within the railroads, express companies excepted.

9th.—To ask the National Railroads to undertake the necessary preparatory work so that, as soon as they receive back their lines, they may resume their direct service with the United States and the public be given the benefit of direct rates.

10th.—To revoke, if it has not already been done, the order under which the railroads shall take possession of all cars belonging to private enterprises.

11th.—To call through the Department of Industry and Commerce, a meeting of railroad representatives, whereat shall be present delegates from the Congress of Merchants and experts to be appointed by the said Department, to study methods the most beneficial to the interests of all parties concerned.

12th.—To allow a 25% discount on freight in the transportation of corn.

13th.—To grant for one year the free importation of and a discount of 50% on railroad tariffs in the transportation of agricultural machinery.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF CERTAIN RAILROAD LINES AND THE ISSUING OF THE LAW ON HIGHWAYS.

It was voted that *Whereas*:—the ways of communication are of great importance to the development of home and foreign trade and from the loan to be obtained a portion thereof could be devoted to the construction or termination of certain railroad lines of capital importance;

Whereas:—the development of highroads properly constructed to facilitate drainage and the transit of automobiles

daily becomes of greater importance and it is therefore urgent to issue a law on highroads;

Whereas:—in order to establish communications in a most wealthy region of the Veracruz ridge it is expedient to build a bridge over the Jamapa river; be it

Resolved:—That the First National Congress of Merchants ask the Government to have the following lines constructed:

1.—The termination of the Southern Pacific Railroad as far as the city of Guadalajara.

2.—A railroad between the Isthmus of Tehuantepec and Yucatan, running through the States of Tabasco and Campeche.

3.—A railroad line directly connecting with the port of Tampico, having a branch to Tuxpan.

4.—The extension of the Cuernavaca line as far as the port of Acapulco.

5.—The continuation of the railroad from Durango to Mazatlan, that from Aguascalientes to Guadalajara; a line, which starting from a point in the already existing line between Guadalajara and Manzanillo, may connect with another point in the line from Tepic to Guadalajara, running through the districts of Autlan, Mascota and other bounding districts; the lines from Los Reyes, Uruapan and the Valley of the Balsas river, from San Marcos to Huajuapán, from Oaxaca to the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, the line to connect the Pan-American Railroad with the projected line between Santa Lucrecia and Merida and which runs to the center of Chiapas with a branch to Comitán, and finally, the line between Merida and the towns on the East coast of Yucatan as far as Balcár.

6.—The line from San Luis Potosí to Guadalajara, running through to Lagos.

Resolved:—that the First National Congress of Merchants moreover ask the Federal Government to procure the cooperation of the State Governments for the construction of highroads and to issue a law on highways. Finally, that the De-

partment of Communications be urged to build a bridge over the Jamapa river.

MEASURES TO BE INSTITUTED PROPERLY TO DEVELOP THE NATURAL RESOURCES OF THE PACIFIC COAST.

It was *voted* that *Whereas*:—the immense natural resources of the Pacific coast do not contribute their due share to national wealth, owing to the lack of ways of communication; and in order to construct the latter, certain industrial elements are indispensable, the production of which it is patriotic to promote; be it

Resolved:—that the First National Congress of Merchants shall solicit the support of the Executive of the Union for the carrying out of the following work:

I.—The Rio Colorado, Sonora and Lower California Railroad;

II.—The great Iron and Steel Foundry on firm ground, at Magdalena Bay; and

III.—The exploitation of national products, iron and other mineral deposits, in the aforementioned region.

THE DUE COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRECEPTS UNDER ARTICLE 590 OF THE COMMERCIAL CODE AND THOSE UNDER ARTICLE 119 OF THE RAILROAD RULES AND REGULATIONS.

It was *voted* that *Whereas*:—the responsibilities of transfers should not be waived by the shipper; be it

Resolved:—that the First National Congress of Merchants ask that transfer companies shall be required to strictly

comply with the precepts under article 590 of the Commercial Code and correlative ones, as well as with those under article 119 of the railroad rules and regulations. It shall likewise ask that any statement on the part of the shipper, that may signify the waiving of the responsibilities of the transfer, shall be prohibited.

AMENDMENTS THAT OUGHT TO BE MADE TO THE COMMERCIAL CODE CONCERNING BANKRUPTCY.

It was *voted* that *Whereas*:—the bankruptcy law as contained in the Commercial Code is opposed to the interest of the Body Commercial, inasmuch as it protects a fraudulent bankrupt, and is an obstacle to commercial liquidations being carried out with the speed that mercantile interest demand;

Whereas:—the Commercial Code in bankruptcy matters for these reasons requires radical amendments based upon a clear and sound judgment, and upon a legal doctrine in harmony with commercial equity, and calculated to protect the interests of bona fide merchants;

Whereas:—under bankruptcy legislation, four objects should be pursued by the law: 1st—to cut to the root a commercial situation that is a source of injury to several parties; 2nd.—to preserve the assets of the bankrupt for the benefit of his creditors; 3rd.—to distribute the said assets according to justice; and 4th.—to demand from the bankrupt such responsibilities as he may have incurred, according as he may have proceeded, whether in the civil or criminal order, when the acts of a merchant border upon crime; be it

Resolved:—that the First National Congress of Merchants ask the Department of Industry and Commerce that it be pleased to take such steps, as may by it be deemed appropriate, for the purpose of amending chapter 1, Book 4, and

chapter 4, Book 5, of the Commercial Code, under the following general bases:—

1st.—The revision of the classification of failures, following a simpler and less casuistic criterion than that established in the relative chapter;

2nd.—The abrogation of the intervention of the clerks of the courts in the formation of inventories, the said functionaries being substituted by licensed brokers appointed from among those who specially devote themselves to the branch of commerce pertaining to the subject matter of the failure;

3rd.—The substitution of the interventor by a commission composed of three merchants, a supply member of the said commission being furthermore appointed. This commission shall be appointed as soon as the most important creditors of the bankrupt firm are known, and their functions shall include all those assigned by the law to interventors, together with certain others tending to facilitate the rapid progress of the bankruptcy proceedings. The said commission shall fix and call the creditors' meetings at which the receiver shall preside as chairman. At these meetings one of the members of the commission shall act as secretary, to draw up the relative minutes and guard the documents and the accounts. The receiver on his part shall inform the judge of the court of all of the minutes of the meetings held, and once the relative reports have been presented, the judge shall decide upon the controversies which may have arisen in the said meetings, the public attorney having been previously given a hearing;

4th.—Creditors' meetings shall under no circumstances be called for a date later than one month from the date of the publication of the notice; the notices of meetings to be published abroad, shall be sent by cable, the Mexican consul accredited in the locality being commissioned to publish the relative notices wherever it may be necessary.

5th.—The notification for the creditors' meetings shall be made through a notary appointed by the receiver, in accord

with the creditors' commission, the said meetings to take place whatever be the number of creditors present, provided all have been summoned;

6th.—The receiver shall take the necessary steps to place the case under the jurisdiction of the criminal authorities, provided there be sufficient data to regard the failure as fraudulent, and should the receiver not fulfill this obligation, the creditors who form the commission, may take the necessary steps to bring the matter before the judge;

7th.—A criminal judge shall not pronounce definite judgment in bankruptcy proceedings, until the judge in charge of the proceedings shall have resolved upon the legitimacy of the credits; and

8th.—Appeals in bankruptcy proceedings, both concerning final awards and interlocutory matters, shall be tried and resolved preferently to other business in view of the many parties concerned in bankruptcy suits.

It was likewise *voted* that *Whereas*:—it is necessary to make certain amendments to the Criminal Code, in consonance with those made to the Commercial Code, be it

Resolved:—that the said Congress ask the Department of Industry and Commerce likewise to take the necessary steps in order that the said Criminal Code be amended in matters relative to fraudulent bankruptcy, in accord with the classification which the said law may make of failures, and especially establishing whether a penalty should be imposed on a culpable bankrupt or whether the latter should be punished under the general precepts governing misdemeanors.

THE PROFESSIONS OF CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT AND BROKER.

It was *voted* that *Whereas*:—chartered accountants and licensed brokers are most important factors in commercial ac-

tivities, and that it is expedient clearly to define the rights and attributions both of the former and of the latter; it was

Resolved:—that the Permanent Commission of the First National Congress of Merchants, on behalf of and in representation of the Congress, shall ask the Department of Industry and Commerce:—

1st.—To be pleased immediately to appoint two commissions to study the legal precepts that shall be amended or instituted for the purpose above mentioned:

2nd.—That the Commission entrusted to study the part relative to the profession of chartered accountant be composed of a delegate from the aforementioned Department, as Chairman; of a representative of the High School of Commerce and Administration; another from the Permanent Commission of the First National Congress of Merchants; another from the Executive Committee of the National Federation of Chambers of Commerce of the United Mexican States, and lastly one from the College of Chartered Accountants;

3rd.—That the Commission entrusted to study the part relative to licensed brokers, shall be formed similarly to the preceding commission, except that the fifth member shall be delegated by the Licensed Brokers' Association of this capital;

4th.—That the said commissions, when studying these matters, shall consider the projects submitted to the Congress by the College of Chartered Accountants and the Licensed Brokers' Association respectively; likewise the resolutions passed upon the said projects and the relative part of the minutes of the meeting of the Permanent Commission whereat these matters were discussed; and

5th.—That the reports of both commissions be sent to the Department of Industry and Commerce, in order that in view thereof it may resolve what it may deem most suitable to the interests of the abovenamed professions, of the Body Commercial and of the community in general.

THE ADVISABILITY OF FACILITATING PROTEST PROCEEDINGS.

It was *voted* that *Whereas*:—the protest of drafts and bills of exchange for non-acceptance or non-payment, under present circumstances involves a dilatory and costly procedure, it was

Resolved:—that the First National Congress of Merchants propose that article 516 of the Commercial Code be amended in the sense that authorization should be given for special books of protest to be printed, wherefrom the Notary may detach one leaf to be delivered, duly authorized, to the interested party, the Notary keeping the duplicate—without detaching it from the book—for his own safe-guard and record.

EXEMPTION FROM TAXATION OF NOTICES PUBLISHED BY PERIODICALS WHICH SERVE AS ORGANS OF THE CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE.

It was *voted* that *Whereas*:—the periodicals which serve as organs of the Chambers of Commerce produce the latter certain small rescues from the publication of advertisements which in most cases are published by members, and that the object pursued by the said periodicals should be considered as beneficial and of general interest; it was

Resolved:—that the First National Congress of Merchants is unanimously of the opinion that the tax of 10% under fraction B of the law of June the 5th. 1917 shall not be applicable to advertisements published in periodicals that serve as special organs of any of the Chambers of Commerce already established or that may hereinafter be established in the Republic.

GRANTS AND PRIVILEGES TO COMMERCIAL TRAVELLERS.

It was *voted* that *Whereas*:—commercial travellers contribute most efficiently to the promotion and growth of commerce, wherefore certain privileges have been granted them in other countries; and they represent legally organized commercial firms and carry out commercial transactions with merchants and industrials who likewise pay their taxes; be it

Resolved:—that the First National Congress of Merchants ask the Federal Executive, the State, and the Municipal Governments, to free from all taxation commercial travellers who carry out transactions with merchants and industrials legally established in the country. That it shall likewise ask the Federal Executive to take the necessary steps in order that railroad and ship companies that enjoy concessions from the Federal Government, may allow commercial travellers 50% discount on their personal transportation and free luggage to the amount of 100 kilograms; and that these privileges be stipulated for in all concessions in future to be granted to new railroad or navigation enterprises; with the understanding that in order to make use of these privileges, commercial travellers shall carry with them identification cards viséed by some Chamber of Commerce and by the Mutual Society of Commercial Travellers in the Mexican Republic.

THE LEGAL CAPACITY OF THE MUTUAL SOCIETY OF COMMERCIAL TRAVELLERS.

It was *voted* that *Whereas*:—commercial travellers are powerful auxiliaries of commerce and industry and therefore should be given all possible assistance in order the more efficaciously to perform their functions; be it

Resolved:—that the First National Congress of Merchants shall ask:

1st.—That the legal capacity of the Mutual Society of Commercial Travellers be recognized, both by the Government and the National Chambers of Commerce, in order that the initiatives that the said Society may present on behalf of the Body of Commercial Travellers or on behalf of the Commercial and Industrial Bodies of the country, be given due consideration;

2nd.—That at the future Congresses of Merchants to be held in the Republic, delegates from the Society abovenamed shall be admitted, having the right of discussion and of vote in the said assemblies.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A FREE ZONE ON THE BORDER WITH THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

It was *voted* that *Whereas*:—through the neglect of the Northern border of our Republic a constantly increasing exodus of Mexicans has been going on;

Whereas:—since the abolition of the old free zone, commerce in frontier towns kept falling off more and more every day, until it has now assumed a most alarming character;

Whereas:—such a state of things must no longer continue, and the only remedy thereto lies in the reestablishment of the free zone on the frontier, be it

Resolved:—that the First National Congress of Merchants ask the Department of Industry and Commerce to be pleased to take this matter into consideration, and should it deem it proper, that it call the attention of whomsoever it may concern, to the expediency of a decree being issued by Congress, establishing the free zone on the frontier with the United States of North America.

THE DESPATCH OF MERCHANDISE AT THE PORT OF VERACRUZ.

It was *voted* that *Whereas*:—there no longer exist the circumstances under which the term granted to merchants under article 275 of the general Customs Regulations, for the presentation, despatch and withdrawal of merchandise arriving at the port of Veracruz, was limited to 15 days, and moreover, whereas such limitation is grievously detrimental to the interests of merchants; be it

Resolved:—that the First National Congress of Merchants ask the Federal Government once more to enforce article 275 of the general Customs Regulations.

THE BUILDING OF SHEDS AT THE PORTS.

It was *voted* that *Whereas*:—the lack of adequate buildings at the ports to store cargo in exposes the latter to thefts and damage, which contribute to increase the cost; if at all times such increases are to be avoided, all the more should they now be so, the necessity for economy being patently imperative; be it

Resolved:—that the First National Congress of Merchants ask the Federal Government to hasten the construction of the sheds begun at the ports of Veracruz and Manzanillo and to build any others that may be necessary both in the said ports and in all the other ports in the country.

THE CANALIZATION OF THE BARRA DE FRONTERA (Frontera Bar.)

It was *voted* that *Whereas*:—all possible efforts should be made to promote commerce, industry and agriculture, and one of the necessary means to this end is the establishments of easy and rapid ways of communication, be it

Resolved:—that the First National Congress of Merchants express its unanimous opinion that the canalization of the Barra de Frontera be at once proceeded to, it being of incalculable benefit to the development of an important zone of the country.

THE FREE INTRODUCTION OF CRUDE OIL ALONG THE PACIFIC COAST.

It was *voted* that *Whereas*:—industrial conditions in the Pacific region are at present very difficult, principally due to the shortage of fuel; the few industries which now exist are compelled to feed their engines with coal brought from Australia, Japan, or Canada, and with a view to promoting industry in those regions, be it

Resolved:—that the First National Congress of Merchants ask the Supreme Government to permit the free importation of crude oil intended for use along the Pacific coast, until such a time as Mexican oil may reach that section of the country, at a cost at least of 10 % higher than American oil.

THE INTRODUCTION OF GASOLINE INTO THE STATE OF TABASCO.

It was *voted* that *Whereas*:—in the state of Tabasco due to the innumerable rivers that run through the State, the prin-

cipal traffic, both of passengers and of freight, is carried on by means of steamers and launches which use gasoline as fuel, this substance therefore becoming necessary in that State in order especially to facilitate the growth of commerce, be it

Resolved:—that the First National Congress of Merchants request the Supreme Government to be pleased to institute such measures, as it may deem necessary, in order that the State of Tabasco may not lack gasoline.

THE FREE EXPORTATION OF COTTON.

It was *voted* that *Whereas:*—the fundamental principles of political economy recommend under normal circumstances the liberty of commerce;

Whereas:—although the cotton production in our country is not sufficient to meet our own demand, it might possibly happen that, through some conflict arising between the industrials and the workmen, certain industries should become paralyzed to the detriment of farmers, if the latter had not the right to dispose of their merchandise by applying to foreign markets;

Whereas:—under prevailing conditions there is an urgent need of capital in this country to promote agriculture, industry, and every kind of enterprise, and it would be unjust under such conditions to reduce farmers to one sole means of disposing of their crops, seeing that this means would not produce them the necessary amount of money wherewith to cover their expenses;

Whereas:—certain decrees which the Government may have to issue with a view to resolve various economical problems, might seriously affect farmers, as it happened with the decree relative to the free importation of various kinds of cotton manufactures, be it

Resolved:—that the First National Congress of Merchants

ask the Executive of the Union to permit the free exportation of national cotton, so that farmers may be placed in a position to guard themselves against the dangers wherewith they might otherwise eventually be threatened; leaving to the good judgment of the Government whether or not to tax such exportation temporarily, should the circumstances under which the country may be placed so demand it, by reason of international conditions or of the interior political situation of the country.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF OFFICIAL STOCK EXCHANGES.

It was *voted* that *Whereas*:—the institution of official stock exchanges efficaciously contributes to the stability of prices of articles of prime necessity and, on the other hand, it may serve to moralize the commercial profession, by doing away with or at least reducing immoderate speculation to a minimum; be it

Resolved:—that the First National Congress of Merchants ask the Federal and State Governments to be pleased to consider the idea of establishing official stock exchange in the capital of the Republic and in the capitals of each of the States of the Federation.

MEASURES WHICH IT IS ADVISABLE TO INSTITUTE IN ORDER TO AVOID A POSSIBLE RISE IN PRICE OF ARTICLES OF PRIME NECESSITY.

It was *voted* that *Whereas*:—railroad circulation is to the Republic as the circulation of the blood to the human body, and the former should be made more expeditious by regulating it;

Whereas:—the want of fulfilment of the relative regula-

tions, the shortage of rolling stock, the gratuities given to traffic managers, and other encumbrances which have unlawfully been established, do harm to commerce and to the proletariat;

Whereas:—supplies of corn will remedy many necessities and it is expedient for this purpose to grant all possible privileges;

Whereas:—it is the duty of humanity and of patriotism to procure the remedy to the prodigious necessities which through various causes now render this life of the nation so difficult; be it

Resolved:—That the First National Congress of Merchants submit:—

Ist.—That the Executive of the Union instruct the Management of the Constitutionalist Railroads that, while the shortage of rolling stock to attend to their own necessities lasts, they shall accept private property cars, redeeming their value with 10% of the sums collected for freight.

2nd.—To order the strict fulfilment of the regulations in force relative to the receipt, shipment and reshipment of merchandise; the order in which the cars shall be furnished; the aggregate number of kilometers covered daily and the compliance with the freight service rates.

3rd.—That it grant legal capacity to the Chambers of Commerce already or that may hereinafter be established and to the delegations from the said Chambers, authorizing them to see that the railroad rules and regulations be strictly complied with, especially regarding the following points:

A.—In the receipt and reshipment of merchandise at all the stations, so that the available rolling stock may furnish a complete service.

B.—In the order in which cars should be furnished, so that this be done by strict order of register.

C.—In watching that the aggregate number of kilometers to be covered daily or the minimum kilometrage established under the regulations, be strictly complied with;

D.—In watching that small freight shipments be not delayed in the despatch thereof.

E.—In informing the Department of Industry and Commerce of all infringements of whatever sort committed by the railroad employees.

4th.—That the Railroad Management be ordered to eliminate the additional charge on haulage of empty cars and that freight payments cease to be made in advance.

5th.—That, for as long as it may be deemed necessary, the charges for consular invoices and port duties on corn be revoked.

6th.—That during two months from the date of the relative order, corn be transported free of charge from the borders or ports of the Republic to its final destination, and that it be given preference over every other kind of merchandise, the necessary cars for its transportation being always furnished.

7th.—That a decree be issued laying upon importers of cotton fabrics introduced free of duty, the obligation of investing 20% of the amount of the relative invoice in the importation of corn to be sold to the people at an equitable price.

8th.—That a reduction of at least 50% on freights be decreed and likewise the complete exemption from customs duties on imported agricultural implements, which shall at the same time be given every facility for the rapid transportation thereof.

9th.—That the railroads facilitate the rapid transportation of bananas and other fruit and of vegetables in general.

10th.—That the constitutional precepts relative to the free transit of merchandise from one State to another in the Republic, be duly observed.

11th.—That, adopting suitable means for the purpose, the cultivation of all agricultural land be made compulsory, especially when suitable for the production of articles of prime necessity.

12th.—That an embargo be laid on the exportation of corn, rice and beans, under severe corporal penalties, for as long a time as our own production may not be sufficient to cover the necessities of the people.

13th.—That the Central Executive Committee in charge of the importation and distribution of corn in accord with the Permanent Commission of the First National Congress of Merchants, and empowered to carry out all the necessary measures for the proper fulfilment of their commission, see that the corn be sold at an equitable price, invite all the Chambers of Commerce and similar corporations at once to establish local committees, that shall cooperate with the Central Committee to remedy public necessities, and facilitate them the purchase and importation of corn, and as a last resort supplying them with the said grain strictly at cost price.

14th.—That endeavours be made to lower the price of fuel employed in tractors devoted to agriculture, so as to place the farmer in a position to obtain it as cheaply as possible.

MEASURES TENDING TO PROMOTE AGRICULTURE

It was *voted* that *Whereas*:—among the means that may be adopted to guard against the rise in price of articles of prime necessity, there are some which although they may not give immediate results, are not on that account less beneficial, inasmuch as they serve to avoid or at least attenuate future evils.

Such measures are those that tend to promote agriculture, which is the principal source of food.

At present, agriculture is facing four great obstacles to its development:—

1st.—The lack of guarantees to render the proper exploitation of farms possible. In many cases, the very troops of the Government are the obstacle to the work in a farm.

2nd.—The heavy taxes disproportionately laid on rural property at a time when the production is very scanty.

3rd.—The little thought given to the fractioning, that is being carried on with great detriment to the production, since perfectly well cultivated farms are being handed over to parties who altogether lack the elements wherewith to make them produce as they should. The loss amounts to 80%.

4th.—The shortage of peons and work-animals. Be it.

Resolved:—that the First National Congress of Merchants ask the Supreme Government and the Governors of the different States:

1st.—That they be pleased to institute such measures as they may deem appropriate, in order that farmers be given full guarantees.

2nd.—That they be pleased to reduce the taxes on agriculture as much as possible.

3rd.—That they be pleased to call the attention of the Agrarian Commission to the division of land.

4th.—That they be pleased to grant the free introduction of all kinds of agricultural machinery and implements and likewise a rebate of 50% on freight charges on these articles.

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